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WORKS

BY

J. LOGIE ROBERTSON, M.A.,

FIRST ENGLISH MASTER, EDINBURGH LADIES' COLLEGE.

I.

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

II.

OUTLINES OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

III.

ENGLISH VERSE FOR JUNIOR CLASSES.

PART I.—CHAUCER TO COLERIDGE.

PART II.—NINETEENTH CENTURY POETS.

IV.

ENGLISH PROSE FOR JUNIOR AND SENIOR
CLASSES.

PART I.—MALORY TO BOSWELL.

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V.

ENGLISH DRAMA.

VI.

THE SELECT CHAUCER.

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THE SELECT CHAUCER

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EDITED AND ELUCIDATED BY

J. LOGIE ROBERTSON, M.A.

AUTHOR OF

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EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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PREFACE.

CHAUCER is now happily an established classic in the curriculum of our higher schools. No one can deny his value in any scheme of a liberal English education. His merits are indisputable on whatever side we regard them—poetical, historical, or philological. Hitherto the study of him in the class-room has been confined, for the most part, to the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* and two or three of the Tales themselves, such as the adventures of Constance, the changeful fortune of Griselda, and the unfinished “story of Cambuscan bold.” It must be owned that some limitation is necessary, not only from the nature of a considerable part of Chaucer’s work, but from the mere volume of it. Yet it is desirable that a larger range or choice of Chaucerian study should be offered to the young student of our literature, such as may ensure a more comprehensive and correct acquaintance with the wealth and variety, along with some knowledge of the development, of Chaucer’s genius.

The Select Chaucer offers such a range or choice. It is in two Parts, published separately and together. Part I. deals with the Canterbury poems in such a way as to show the unity of the work as a whole, and the amazing variety of it. For this purpose the selected text is so divided as to

present in succession the general plan of the pilgrimage, the pilgrims, talk and incident by the way, and of the tales, more or less completely,—the Knight's, the Reeve's, the Lawyer's, the Prioress's, the Monk's, the Nun's Priest's, the Pardoner's, the Summoner's, the Clerk's, and the Squire's, along with illustrative portions from the tales of the Miller, the Shipman, the Physician, the Wife of Bath, the Merchant, the Franklin, and the Manciple. Each of these divisions, for the most part, is prefaced by explanatory or critical remarks, and followed by notes of elucidation; and, when necessary, summaries in prose are given to connect and carry on the narrative or tale, with a view to some preservation of its unity.

Part II. deals with those of Chaucer's poems that do not form part of the Canterbury collection. For convenience they have been named Minor Poems, as being rather of less importance than of less length than the Canterbury poems; for there is no doubt that the Canterbury series are the crown and glory of Chaucer's poetical work. They are mostly arranged in the probable order of their production, and show very beautifully the natural development not only of Chaucer's verse but of his poetry as well. They include selected parts of the much disputed *Romaunt of the Rose*, *The Book of the Duchess*, *The Parliament of Fowls*, *The House of Fame*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*, the whole of the legend of Ariadne, &c. Here also each poem is introduced, accompanied, and followed by such explanations as are necessary to a proper comprehension of the whole, and a detailed knowledge of the selected parts.

In addition to this equipment of the Text, other information on the general subject of Chaucer and Middle English is provided in the first forty pages of the book, with the view of giving interest to the study, and making it intel-

ligent, rapid, and easy. For this purpose a chronology of the poet's life and age has been carefully prepared, and is followed by a brief narrative and estimate of his life and work. His English is next considered in respect of grammar and diction, some notice being afterwards taken of his versification, and of the pronunciation of English in the fourteenth century.

At the end of the book a simple glossary is given of words that are now obsolete or rare, or that are used by Chaucer in a special sense or a sense occasionally peculiar.

The text of the *Canterbury poems* as here presented is, for much the greater part, based on the readings of the *Ellesmere* and *Harleian MSS.*, slightly modified by collation of these with such other authorities as are given in *Dr Furnivall's Six Text Print*, and in the editions of *Dr Morris* and *Dr Skeat*. Some uniformity of spelling has been adopted, but has occasionally been departed from for the purpose of showing the variety of Chaucerian form. The text of the *Minor Poems* has been similarly collated.

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CHRONOLOGICAL NOTES

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE LIFE AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF CHAUCER.

1235. At this time flourished Guillaume de Lorris, author of the first part of the *Roman de la Rose*.
1250. About this time was born Jean de Meung (Jean Clopinel, "Limping John"), the Voltaire of his time, author of the second (and longer) part of the *Roman de la Rose*. He died *circa* 1301.
1265. Birth of Dante. He died 1321.
1304. Birth of Petrarch. He died at Arquà, near Padua, 1374.
1313. Birth of Boccaccio, author of *Teseide*, *Filostrato*, and the *Decameron*—the last finished in 1358. He died in 1375.
1327. Reign of Edward III. begins ; ends in 1377.
1337. Birth of Froissart ; began his *Chronicle* in 1357 ; visited the English Court in 1360 ; died in 1410.
1338. John Chaucer in attendance on Edward III.
1340. Birth of Chaucer, son of John Chaucer and his (second) wife Agnes—persons of some substance residing in their own house, in Thames Street, near London Bridge. John Chaucer, like his father Robert before him, a vintner and tavern-keeper. His half-brother, Thomas Heroun, also a vintner. "Le chaucier" means "the shoemaker," maker of *chausses*.¹ Chaucers came over with the Conqueror. The surname or (it may be) designation not uncommon in London in the fourteenth century.
- Birth of John of Gaunt, the king's third son. He

¹ A writer in the 'Athenæum,' Feb. 4, 1899, derives the name from *chaufecire*, a "chafe-wax."

proved the steady patron of Chaucer. In this year also was born Blanche, the duchess, (first) wife of John of Gaunt, and mother of Henry IV.

1346. Battle of Cressy.

1348. The Black Death, a bubonic plague, visits Europe—at Florence; reaches England, population then about 4 millions—one-third of whom cut off; London attacked in the winter—population about 300,000, of whom not less than 100,000 perished. Chaucer's grandfather Robert probably among the victims—in 1349.

1350. At this time flourished Lawrence Minot, author of English war-lyrics in celebration of the battles of Edward III.

1356. Battle of Poitiers.

1357. Chaucer, now in his sixteenth or seventeenth year, a page in the household of Prince Lionel, the king's second son, in attendance on the Lady Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, Lionel's wife.

1359. In this year Chaucer first "bore arms." An English army invaded France, and Chaucer went either as a volunteer or as one of Prince Lionel's retainers. He was captured in Brittany early in the campaign, and lodged in a French prison.

This year John of Gaunt married Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster.

1360. Treaty of Bretigny. Chaucer ransomed, the king contributing £16 towards his deliverance. [£1 then = at least £10 to-day.]

1361. The Plague revisits England.

1362. Langland's 'Vision of Piers Plowman.' Act authorising the use of English instead of French in law-courts, schools, &c.—evidence that the nation was now indeed English.

1363. About this time, birth of Thomas Chaucer, supposed to be the poet's son. His great-grandson was John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln.

1365. Chaucer busy translating the *Roman de la Rose* about this time.

1366. Death of John Chaucer, the poet's father. His mother, after a short widowhood, married another vintner, Bartholomew Attechapel.

Mention made this year of a pension of ten marks

[1 mark = 13s. 4d.] to a Philippa Chaucer, a lady of the queen's chamber. This may be the poet's wife; perhaps (but less likely) only a namesake. If the poet's wife, probably Philippa Roet, daughter of a knight of Hainault, and sister of Katharine, widow of Sir Hugh Swynford, and afterwards wife of John of Gaunt.

1367. At or before this date the Lady Elizabeth, wife of Prince Lionel, died. Chaucer now (and for some time, probably) in the king's service ("valettus noster"), with annual pension for life of twenty marks.

1368. Death of Prince Lionel, Duke of Clarence. From this time at latest, onward, Prince John, Duke of Lancaster, the poet's patron.

Chaucer raised from rank of "valettus," or yeoman, to that of "esquire of lesser degree": now established in the king's household and service.

1369. Recurrence of the Plague. Death of Blanche, the duchess: Chaucer's poem on the event. Death of Queen Philippa; Philippa Chaucer passes permanently into the household of John of Gaunt.

1372. Chaucer in Italy—on a commercial mission, in the king's service, to Genoa and Pisa; visits Florence; probably meets Petrarch at Padua. Great influence on the development of his genius from this visit. John of Gaunt marries Constance, a daughter of Pedro the Cruel of Castile, afterwards to lay claim to the crown of Castile. (His Spanish expeditions generally unsuccessful.)

1374. First mention of Chaucer as a married man—his wife's name Philippa. Chaucer made Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidy of Wools, Skins, and Leathers in the port of London; granted (from St George's day, April 23) a daily pitcher of wine; pension of £10 to him and his wife for past services rendered by them to John of Gaunt and to the queen. This year, also, the poet takes perpetual lease of a house in Aldgate from the Corporation (to remain tenant for only ten or twelve years).

Death of Petrarch.

1375. Death of Boccaccio. Barbour's *Brus*. Further grants of money, and other allowances, made to Chaucer as one of the royal esquires.

1376. Death of the Black Prince, the king's eldest son. Chaucer again employed in the king's service abroad.
1377. Chaucer employed on a secret mission to Flanders. Death of Edward III.; accession of his grandson, Richard II. Chaucer employed on a mission to France. Chaucer again in Italy.
1378. Wyclif's imprisonment and examination ordered by a papal bull. Chaucer in Lombardy on the king's errand,—Gower the poet acting during his absence from England as his agent. This year the daily pitcher of wine, granted four years before, commuted for annual payment of twenty marks.
1380. Wyclif's *English Bible* about this time. Chaucer writes *The Parlement of Foules* in anticipation of the young king's marriage.
1381. Richard II. marries Anne of Bohemia. Wat Tyler's rebellion. Birth of Lewis, Chaucer's "little son."
1382. Chaucer appointed to another lucrative comptrollership—viz., of the Petty Customs, with the special privilege of appointing a deputy.
1384. Chaucer writes *The Hous of Fame*. Death of Wyclif.
1385. Chaucer allowed to discharge by deputy his duties as Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidy. Finishes, this year probably, his *Troilus and Cressid*. Transfers his residence from London to Greenwich, where he lives for the next fourteen years. Discovery of the heroic couplet about this time.
1386. Chaucer a knight of the shire for Kent in the Parliament that met at Westminster this year. The poet now in his most prosperous state. About this time busy at *The Legend of Good Women*. Idea of the *Canterbury Tales* occurs to him. John of Gaunt in Spain; his brother (and rival?), Thomas of Gloucester, in power at Court. Hence probably, in December, Chaucer's great reverse of fortune; dismissal from the comptrollerships, which were given the one to Adam Yerdely, the other to Henry Gisors.
1387. Chaucer busy at *The Canterbury Tales*. Death of his wife—from whom he had been, whatever the cause, for many years more or less estranged, though latterly a

reconciliation with some return of affection would seem to have been made.

1389. Return to England of John of Gaunt, and revival of Chaucer's fortunes ; appointed Clerk of Works at Westminster.
1390. Chaucer appointed, in addition, Clerk of Works at Windsor. A great tournament at Smithfield in May ; construction of scaffold, for view of which by king and queen, superintended by Chaucer. One of a Commission appointed to repair the Thames banks near Greenwich. Appointed joint-Forester of Petherton Park in Somersetshire. Twice robbed of money by a gang of thieves in September, the sums amounting to about £200 of our money. Chaucer was forgiven the repayment of this money.
1391. Chaucer writes, for his "little son Lewis," a boy of ten, his treatise (in prose) *On the Astrolabē*. Superseded as Clerk of Works by John Gedney.
1393. Gower's *Confessio Amantis*.
1394. Chaucer granted a pension of £20 for life ; impecunious for the next four or five years—shown in various ways, as contraction of loans on the security of his pension, petitions for advance of pension, &c
1395. Death of the Scottish poet Barbour.
1396. John of Gaunt marries his mistress Katharine Swynford (*née* Roet), sister of Philippa Roet, or Chaucer.
1398. Chaucer sued for a debt of about £150 of our money. Obtains letters of protection for two years from arrest for debt. Appointed sole Forester of Petherton Park. Grant of a tun of wine yearly, for life.
1399. Death of John of Gaunt. Richard II. deposed. Henry IV., son of John of Gaunt by his first wife Blanche, the duchess, begins his reign. Chaucer sends to the new king the verses *Compleynt to his Pars*, and is at once favoured with the royal notice by having (in addition to the grant of 1394) his pension of twenty marks doubled. His total income now equal to about £500 of our money. On Christmas day he takes a lease (for fifty-three years) of a house in the garden of St Mary's Chapel, Westminster.
1400. Payment in June of instalment of pension into the hands

of Henry Somers—Chaucer himself being unable, probably through illness, to attend in person.

Death of Chaucer, October 25. Buried in the Abbey, in that part afterwards called, from him, the Poet's Corner.

Same year, probably, death of Langland.

1408. Death of Gower.

1532. First collected edition of Chaucer's Poems, by W. Thynne.

1561. Stowe's edition published.

1598. Speght's edition (with much that is not Chaucer's).

1775-1778. Tyrwhitt's edition of *The Canterbury Tales*.

1871. Russell-Lowell's *My Study Windows*, containing a fine essay on Chaucer.

1880. Prof. Ward's *Chaucer*, in English Men of Letters series.

1894. Dr Skeat's Complete Edition of Chaucer's Works.

A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

1340–1400.

Chaucer lived through the last sixty years of the fourteenth century. There is no doubt of the year of his death, 1400. He was very probably born in 1340. Edward III. was then king, and was still to reign for thirty-seven years. Through those thirty-seven years, through the next twenty-two years, which comprise the reign of his ill-fated successor, the second Richard, and for one year into the reign of Henry IV., the life of our poet extended.

Those were stirring and eventful times in the annals of England. New and powerful influences were at work in the country; important movements were going on; great events were happening. The period was a time of transition from old customs to new. It was still the middle ages, but the middle ages were drawing to a close.

Mail-clad knights and yeomen armed with bow and arrows were still winning victories for England, at Cressy and Poitiers, but gunpowder was beginning to revolutionise warfare; there was still much feudal tyranny in both burgh and country, but, in the one, skilled artisans and enterprising traders were growing in numbers and power, and, in the other, rent-paying tenants and a bold peasantry were asserting their rights to recognition; the old monastic clergy and even the friars, though the former were rich and the

latter numerous, were losing their spiritual power, and a new and purer religion than they practised was creeping into favour; the population, though numbering only some three, or at most four millions, was becoming more truly national and English; and the English language, though French had for centuries been favoured by the ruling classes, was now authorised by Act of Parliament for national use, and was beginning to take its place, beside continental French and Italian, as one of the new languages of Europe. The truth of all this is evidenced by history, and much of it may be illustrated by study of the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*.

Chaucer was born in London, not far from London Bridge, and spent the greater part of his life in that city. He must have been familiar with it from his boyhood. It was then, of course, a very much smaller and quieter city than, with our knowledge of modern London, we can perhaps even imagine. It may, however, be worth our while to try. William Morris's attempt is probably as realistic as any: we must first of all, he says, forget our own century and environment—

Forget six counties overhung with smoke,
 Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke,
 Forget the spreading of the hideous town;
 Think rather of the packhorse on the down,
 And dream of London, small and white and clean,
 The clear Thames bordered by its gardens green;
 Think that, below bridge, the green lapping waves
 Smite some few keels, that bear Levantine staves
 Cut from the yew-wood on the burnt-up hill,
 And pointed jars that Greek hands toiled to fill,
 And treasured scanty spice from some far sea,
 Florence gold-cloth, and Ypres napery,
 And cloth of Gaunt, and hogsheads of Guienne;
 While nigh the thronged wharf Geoffrey Chaucer's pen
 Moves over bills of lading.

—PROLOGUE to *The Earthly Paradise*.

Small though London then was, and swept though it was every decennial period by the ravages of plague, it was occupied by a vigorous and prosperous community of citizens. A varied and picturesque style of architecture, which did not shut out the country, and throngs of people dressed in a variety of habits in which bright colours strongly predominated, adorned the narrow, winding streets. The open country was only a few minutes' walk from the heart of the town, while in the town itself there were green spaces of field and garden-ground pleasantly interspersed among the houses of the citizens. Thus with the social advantages of the town, Chaucer at the same time enjoyed from boyhood the calm delights and soothing influences of rural life. Two other advantages were his, serviceable, if not essential, to the growth of a great poetical genius—the benefits of courtly training and of foreign travel.

Little is directly known of Chaucer's boyhood. He must have attended school—Paul's Cathedral School, or Anthony's—in the city, and we may infer that a love of reading and observant study was his from the first. All his life he was a student of books, and nature, and human nature. No poet of his time, perhaps, had a more extensive or varied knowledge than Chaucer. His study of books was mostly by lamplight in the long winter evenings; summer found him, at those times when he could be spared from business, among birds and flowers in the country; and at all times, however occupied, he had an observant eye that saw, and retained the impression of, every phase and characteristic of human life. There is no sufficient proof that he was ever a student at either Oxford or Cambridge.

It has been conjectured that, as a grown schoolboy, he may have, in a more or less irregular way, given what help he could in the business of his father's tavern in Thames Street. Fancy has depicted him now in the cellar, now

in the wine-shop, storing or mixing wine, or dispensing it in measures at the call of customers. His knowledge of the art of mixing wines, as well as of their properties, peeps out incidentally here and there in his poems.

Our first vivid but transient glimpse of him is when he had arrived at the age of sixteen. However it came about, and it was probably through his father's occasional connection, in the way of business, with the Court, we find young Chaucer, in the spring of 1357, arrayed in a short cloak and a pair of red and black breeches, performing the ordinary duties of a page in attendance upon the Lady Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, wife of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, a prince of about his own age.

Two years later Chaucer "first bore arms." He accompanied the prince to the French wars, where he had the misfortune to be taken prisoner, and kept in captivity till, in March 1360, he was ransomed and released. Peace was made only a few weeks after his release.

An interval of about seven years passes before we hear definitely of him again. He is now one of the "esquires of lesser degree" of King Edward III., and in receipt of a small pension granted him for life. About this time, it is thought, he must have married a certain Philippa, described as one of the queen's ladies, and also a pensioner of the Court.

Chaucer had already begun to versify, and had found a patron in John of Gaunt, younger brother of Prince Lionel, and of just the same age as himself. The death of Blanche, his patron's wife, in 1369, called forth Chaucer's first more or less original poem of note in a lament for her loss - *The Book of the Duchesse*. This poem, thirty years afterwards, was gratefully remembered to its author's advantage by her son, Henry IV.

From about his thirtieth to his forty-second year Chaucer

approves himself to have been a man of business capacity and courtly tact, by the circumstance that he was employed by the king in as many as seven diplomatic missions abroad, of which three were to Italy.

The first of these Italian embassies was in 1372. It is memorable in the poet's history for his interview with Petrarch at Arqua. He may also have met Boccaccio; but Dante was dead. There is, however, no doubt at all that the genius of Chaucer received a new and vigorous inspiration from the Italian poetry of the Renaissance, with which his sojourn of nearly a year in northern Italy made him well acquainted. The poetical art appealed to him with a new beauty and a new dignity, and he felt the full force of the appeal.

The first Italian mission was otherwise memorable. Its main object had been to arrange with Genoa for a closer commercial relation with English ports; and so pleased was the king with Chaucer's services in the matter that he made him Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidy of Wools, Skins, and Leathers in the port of London, and granted him for life a daily pitcher of wine. At the same time he received a life-pension from his patron, John of Gaunt, partly in consideration of his own past services to the donor and the Duchess Blanche, and partly in consideration of his wife's to Queen Philippa. This comptrollership required Chaucer's personal and (of course) regular attention: his own pen, and not that of a deputy, had to take account of the bills of lading. But his evenings were his own, and these he devoted to studious reading and assiduous writing.

In 1382 he had the good fortune to be appointed to an additional comptrollership, of the Petty Customs, with the great privilege later on of the services of a permanent deputy. This privilege he may have owed to "the good Queen Anne,"

of Bohemia, whose marriage to Richard II. he had celebrated in *The Parlement of Foules* some three or four years previously. Immediately on being released from personal attendance on the Customs in the port of London (1385), the poet transferred his residence from Aldgate, in the city, to Greenwich, and there he lived for the next fourteen years. A better place for the observation of pilgrims journeying to Canterbury could not have been chosen.

The year 1386, the poet being then forty-six years of age, records the high-tide mark of Chaucer's prosperity. Besides the various posts and pensions which he had now for some years enjoyed, Court favour, ample freedom, a stronger assurance of poetical power, and greater domestic comfort, with health of body and hopeful spirits, were all his; and to these was now added the honour of election as a knight of the shire for Kent in the Parliament which met at Westminster. He was happily busy at *The Legend of Good Women*, from which he only broke away as the grander and happier scheme of the Canterbury Pilgrimage rose in his mind. Yet in the winter of this same year he sustained a great reverse of fortune, which reduced him almost to poverty, and which kept him on the brink of poverty for at least three years. It was mainly, if not all, owing to the absence of his patron from England. John of Gaunt was in Spain, and Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, his brother and rival, had secured the chief power at the Court of King Richard. With the rise of Gloucester's power fell the fortunes of the adherents and favourites of Lancaster; and, in December, Chaucer found himself deprived of both the comptrollerships which had been the great sources of his income. Next year his wife died. There is evidence, oft repeated, in his earlier poems, and notably in *The House of Fame*, that he had lived for years—whatever may have been the cause, and on whichever side—alienated from the affec-

tions of his wife ; but there is also a suggestion in *The Legend of Good Women* that some reconciliation and return of affection had latterly taken place between them.

At last, in 1389, with the expected return of John of Gaunt from Spain, the Lancastrian power at Court revived, and a gleam of sunshine fell on the poet's path. He was appointed Clerk of Works at Westminster, a post alone worth at least £400 a-year of our money, and, a few months later, Clerk of Works at Windsor and elsewhere also. One of his duties for 1390 as Clerk of the King's Works was the erection at Smithfield of a scaffold, from which the king and the queen viewed a great tournament held there in that year—an interesting fact in view of the very realistic and reliable account of a tournament given in *The Knight's Tale*. He was, further, put on a commission for the repair of the Thames banks between Greenwich and Woolwich, and made joint-forester, with a certain Richard Brittle, of Petherton Park, in Somersetshire. In the midst of these various duties it was his mischance to be robbed of about £100 of our money on two several occasions in the same month : it was the king's money, and the circumstances of its loss being satisfactorily explained, Chaucer was not required to pay it from his own purse.

For some unknown reason the poet was, for the second time, dismissed from office. The Clerkship of Works was given to John Gedney in 1391. Chaucer was now in a state of poverty, and was often in great straits to raise money. Thrift was apparently no part of his practice. Not till 1394 was there any proof of Royal sympathy with the needy poet in his poverty, but in that year he was granted a pension of £20 (equal to at least ten times that sum of our money). Four years later Richard II.'s last gift to him was the grant of a yearly tun of wine. In the interval between these gifts he was from time to time importuning, and

troubled with debt and persistent creditors. He was now gray-headed, and, though not old, was feeling the invasion of years. Still, his buoyant spirits did not forsake him. In 1399, on the accession of the son of his old patron as King Henry IV., he wrote a half-pathetic, half-humorous *Complaint to his Purse*, which (with a P.S.) he sent by way of supplication to the new king, and, within four days, was gratified with a reply which meant an additional sum, equal to £150 of our money, to his other pensions. He was now assured against want, and placed indeed in fairly comfortable circumstances, being worth a guaranteed income of £500 a-year. He seems to have resolved upon re-ordering his life, for he now at once leased a house in the garden of Our Lady's Chapel at Westminster, and moved into it from Greenwich. His hope was to finish *The Canterbury Tales* here quietly and at leisure; and apparently he meant now to be economical, for the rent was to be £30 (of our money), and the lease was for fifty-three years. He seems, however, either to have fallen into ill-health in his new house, or to have succumbed to an illness from which he trusted to recover by the change. He was unable to call personally for the June instalment of his pension, receiving it by the hands of Henry Somers, and in the following October he was dead. His body was buried in the Abbey, and the place soon came to be known as the Poet's Corner.

In regard to his personal appearance,¹ Chaucer was short of stature and, latterly at least, stout; modest, and almost shy in company, with an "elvysh" or abstracted demeanour as of one just roused from a reverie, and a habit of looking

¹ This portrait of Chaucer by his own hand, as he looked when he made the famous pilgrimage, nearer fifty than forty, will be found in the Prologue to *Sir Thopas*, but some read the irony of the Host's words so as to give Chaucer a slender figure.

down ; yet of an erect bearing of body, and swift in walking. Mine Host of the Tabard is pleasantly ironical on the subject of Chaucer's stoutness, and twits him on his absent looks and taciturnity. Occleve's painted portrait of him shows him as a man of about fifty or over, attired in a gown and peculiar head-dress, or hood, of some dark material ; with down-looking eyes, mild pensive countenance, full lips, and straight, well-formed nose. Occleve painted from memory of his old friend, but he offers an acceptable likeness.

Chaucer's love of lonely nature, of fields and gardens, trees and birds and flowers ; his love of books, and absorption in his reading, sitting for hours "dumb as a stone" till his looks were dazed, along with other interesting details¹ of his personal habits, may be read in the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*.

As a writer of verse he grew to be a consummate artist in both form and melody. He found his metres in France, and chiefly in the work of Guillaume de Machault. He began with iambic tetrameters rimed in couplets, proceeded to iambic pentameters in stanzas, of which rime royal (to anticipate the popular name of the measure) was his favourite, and at last found in the heroic couplet the measure best adapted for the fullest and freest expression of his genius.

As a poet his skill in narrative, natural description, and characterisation has rarely been equalled, never excelled. His most effective touches are made with the utmost ease and simplicity : there is no appearance of striving for effect. The tale is told, the scene presented, the portrait drawn and coloured, not to please any second or third person, but because it is a delight to himself to do it. His range (and his sympathy) is catholic, like the range of Shakespeare and of

¹ *E.g.*, "little abstinent." His love of good eating and drinking, and his studious habits, would tend to make him stout.

Scott: he tells without tediousness almost every kind of story, depicts many diverse types of character, presents humanity without prejudice. Shrewd common-sense, gay humour, and tenderness are his distinctive qualities: there is, besides, a sweet humanity which takes all bitterness from his satire, and exhibits some degree of a gracious sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men. Chaucer has no animosities, and cherishes no grudge. He is a contrast to his contemporary, the atrabilious, over-earnest Langland. He looked upon the world of men with different eyes. He was willing to be pleased, and sought out the bright side habitually. Even the worldliness of the clergy amused him. He could honour and love the poor parson, and yet leave the worldly prior to the enjoyment of his luxuries. His chivalry to women, his gentleness to children, his frank sympathy with youth, and his kindly feeling for all—"both man and bird and beast," and even the flower of the field—are apparent, one or other, in his poetry, wherever we turn the page. He knew and lived in the society of persons of rank, in an age when "the boast of heraldry" and "the pomp of power" were very real things, yet he had the courageous honesty to place the kind heart above the coronet, and simple faithfulness above high descent. Nobility of soul had ever his warmest admiration, without regard to the rank of life in which it was revealed. His humour is usually subtle and playful, sometimes pleasantly flavoured with satire, never false or forced; even at its broadest and coarsest it is genuine, and has at the last gaiety of heart and the artist's apology to excuse it. It is scarcely ever absent from his dialogue. His pathos is natural, pure, and touching. His stories of Constance, the little clergy-boy, and patient Griselda, of Ariadne, and Ugolino, exhibit characteristic specimens of this quality in various relations. His common-sense, blent with gentle banter—showing his

knowledge of the world—may be seen even in his portrait of the monk, or in the postscript to the Clerk's tale of Griselda. He is the first of our writers whose works are read for their own sake, for the pleasure they give the reader.

Chaucer's genius developed under three great influences, and reveals three well-defined stages of growth. There is, first, the French stage, during which he translated and imitated French models: to it belong *The Romaunt of the Rose* and *The Book of the Duchesse*. He never ceased to feel the influence of the French style, but there came, secondly, the great influence of Italian literature—the literature of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. It came upon Chaucer, as a revelation of higher art and aspiration, in 1373, and its influence can be remarked very plainly in the spirit and, less significantly, in the theme and expression of his poetry, till about 1385. To the Italian stage of his poetical development belong *The Clerk's Tale*, the first draught of *The Knight's Tale*, *The Man of Law's Tale*, *The Parliament of Birds*, *The House of Fame*, and *Troilus and Cressida*. The third period of his poetical growth shows Chaucer as a master who, having studied his models and assimilated what was suitable in them, now ventures more confidently upon original work: to this period belong at least part of *The Legend of Good Women*, especially the Prologue, and most of the *Canterbury Tales*.

Chaucer's influence upon other poets can be traced all down the stream of English literary history. His young contemporaries, Occleve and Lydgate, especially the latter, cultivated and continued his manner. The Scottish poets, King James I., Henryson, Dunbar, and Gavin Douglas, but especially Dunbar, were his most brilliant disciples. The Elizabethan dramatists owed obligations to him. Spenser and young Milton sat at his feet for a while. Dryden and

Pope showed their admiration for him in their own way Wordsworth admired, revered, and sought too to modernise him. Better directed was the worship of William Morris, who sought rather to restore the joyousness of his spirit by imitating his example with a collection of tales.

CHAU CER'S ENGLISH.

GRAMMAR AND DICTION.

THE great interest in Chaucer is his poetry. It is for that we read him. But, besides the poetical or literary interest, there are other interests for which he is studied. These are the philological and the historical interests. The philological interest lies in his language—considered both in respect of its grammar and in respect of its diction (word and idiom). The historical interest lies in the revelation his poetry affords of the institutions, modes of life, manners and customs, fashions, pursuits, and opinions of his time—the close of the middle ages.

Chaucer's English belongs to that great division of the history of our language which is known as Middle English. Before Middle English was Anglo-Saxon (now commonly called Old English), and after it came, and continues, Modern English. The Middle English period began when the effects of the Norman Conquest upon the language of England were clearly discernible, and it comes down to near the end of the fifteenth century. *The Saxon Chronicle* ended in 1154, and the Tudor dynasty began in 1485: within these limits lies the period of Middle English. Chaucer is the greatest writer of the Middle English period, the only one that is generally read to-day for pleasure. The next great English writer after him was Spenser, who is the first great poet of Modern

English. Looking back over an interval of about two centuries, Spenser made grateful reference to Chaucer as "the well of English undefiled."

When Chaucer first began to write, about the year 1365, there were in the little kingdom of England, then inhabited by scarcely more than three millions of people, three main dialects of English, each with local varieties; and it was his fortune, or work, to give such prominence to a variety of one of these dialects that it became the national language, and gradually developed into the noble speech which is spoken by many millions throughout the British Empire to-day. The three dialects of the vernacular of Chaucer's time were the Northumbrian or Northern, the Midland, and the Southern. The Midland dialect was spoken from Thames to Humber, and included two well-marked varieties, the East and the West Midland. Chaucer was a native of London, and spoke and wrote in the East variety of the Midland dialect of English. No doubt that was the language of London and of the Court (when the Court ceased the use of French and adopted the native tongue); but it was the wealth and wonderful beauty of Chaucer's poetry that made it at once the literary, and ultimately the national, language of England.

Chaucer's grammar and diction, then, are the grammar and diction of the East Midland dialect of English of the fourteenth century. Neither his grammar nor his diction is difficult to understand. His language, indeed, in either of these aspects, is scarcely less intelligible to a beginner than Spenser's or Shakespeare's. "Not many of his terms," says Dr R. Morris, "are wholly obsolete, and but few of his inflections have gone wholly out of use." Much of the initial difficulty in reading Chaucer's poetry is due to his uncouth forms: the spelling is strange, and has the forbidding look of a foreign tongue. A beginner will therefore find him

more easily intelligible by hearing him read than by reading him. It is not yet usual to print Chaucer's lines, as far as metre and rime will allow, in the modern form, and to recite them with the modern pronunciation, though we take such liberties with the lines of Spenser and of Shakespeare. It would make his poetry more widely known if we did. But there is in the archaic form a pleasure, too, which awaits the student—a bouquet as of medieval times, subtly recommending to the natural affections that naïveté and knowledge of the world of which much of the poetry of Chaucer is a happy blend.

I. HIS GRAMMAR.

Old English was a highly inflected language, with full declension of the noun and the adjective, with grammatical gender, and with other peculiarities. Modern English has few ^{few} inflections and no grammatical gender. Middle English marks the transition from Old English to Modern: its grammar preserves many of the old inflections, but in a weakened form. The most noticeable and most important inflections of Middle English are *-e*, *-en*, and *-es*. There is scarcely a line of Chaucer which does not exemplify the use of one or other of them. A knowledge of them means very much a knowledge of those peculiarities in the grammar of Middle English which differentiate it from ours.

The various reasons for the appearance of final *-e* in Chaucer are presented in the following statements:

1. It may be the reproduction of an Old English termination in noun or adjective (*i.e.*, it may be an essential part of the word)—as *herte*, *sonne*, *dreye*, *swete*, the Old English forms being *heorte*, *sunne*, *dryge*, *swete*.

2. It may be the weakened or "levelled" form of an Old English termination in noun or adjective—as *some*, *wode*, *ale*,

for the Old English *sunu*, *wudu*, *ealu* : or *grome*, *bette*, *knave*, for the Old English *guma*, *betera*, *cnapa*.

3. It may be the reproduction of final *-e* in words from the French—as *joye*, *riche*, *melodie*.

4. It may be the weakened form of a Latin termination—as *diademe* for *diadema*, *Aprille* for *Aprilis*.

5. It may be used superfluously, or with poetical licence—as *yliche*, *thikke*, *brome*, *whelpe*, *quene*, the Old English forms being *onlic*, *thic*, *bróm*, *hwelp*, and *ewén*. But it is rarely so used.

6. It may occasionally represent in nouns the Old English genitive case (sing.) in *-e* or *-an*—as “*halle dore*.”

7. It is often the mark of the dative case (sing.) in nouns, especially after the prepositions *at*, *by*, *for*, *in*, *of*, *on*, *to*—as “*to the rote*.”

8. It marks the definite form of the adjective—as “*the yonge sonne*.”

9. It marks the plural form of the adjective—as “*straunge strondes*.”

10. It marks the vocative case of the adjective—as “*O gode God!*”

11. In verbs it may be a sign of the infinitive—as “*A baggepype wel coude he sowne*.” Here it represents the Old English infinitive in *-an*—preserved in Chaucer as *-en*—“*Wel coude he stelen corn*.”

12. In verbs it may mark the gerundial infinitive—as “*To Canterbury they wende, the holy blisful martir for to seke*.”

13. It may mark the participle past of strong verbs—as “*yfalle in felawshipe*.” Occasionally it marks the part. pres. of any verb, attached to *-ing* (Old Eng. *-ende*).

14. It may mark the indicative past of weak verbs—as “*Yet hadde he but litel gold*.” In such cases it is attached to *-d* or *-t*.

15. It may mark the indicative present, 1st sing., or all

persons of plur.—as “I yow devyse,” or “Thus jangle they and demen and devyse.”

16. It may be a sign of the imperative, sing. or even plur.,—as “Trille (*for* trilleth) this pin,” “Telle us som merie tale.”

17. It may mark the subjunctive mood, through all persons of the sing., in both present and past tenses (in the past tense, attached to *-d* or *-t*)—as “Til ye be ther yow leste, though that ye slepen on his bak or reste.” [In the case of the last word of the example, “reste,” we have final *-e* marking the pres. subj. *plur.*]

18. Final *-e* is the characteristic mark of the adverb, representing the Old English ending in *-a* or in *-an*, or distinguishing the adverbial from the adjectival form,—as some (Old Eng. *sóna*), aboute (Old Eng. *ábútan*), faire (adj. fair), brighte (adj. bright).

Final *-en* in Chaucer may denote—

1. The plural of a noun—as hosen, eyen; to which may be added such plurals (in *-n*) as toon, been, foon. In these instances final *-en* (*-n*) is the survival of the commonest Old English plural suffix *-an*. [Hoses, toos, foon, also occur in Chaucer.]

2. The infinitive, simple or gerundial, of a verb—as “Therefore wol I maken yow disport,” “Shortly for to tellen, the cut fil to the knight.”

3. The plural of any tense of a verb—as “We riden forth.”

4. The participle past of a strong verb—as “He had geten him yet no benefice.”

5. A preposition—as “Withouten more avys.”

Final *-es* in Chaucer may mark—

1. The plural of a noun, rarely of an adjective—as “Smale foules maken melodie.” Some neuter nouns make (as in Old Eng.) no change for the plural, as hors, yeer, sheep, &c.

2. The possessive or genitive case of a noun—as “Worthy was he in his lordes werre.” Some nouns that had their genitive in *-es* in Old Eng. have lost the inflection—as “his lady grace.” So also *fader*, brother, daughter show no inflection for the possessive case: *fader kin*—ancestry, *fader day* = father’s time.

3. An adverb—as *certes*, *thennes*, *alles*, *twyes* (twice).

It may be of service to present here in short compass the inflections of a strong and of a weak verb of the Middle English of Chaucer’s time:—

| | SING. | | PLUR. |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Indic. Pres. | 1. Binde, love. | | |
| | 2. Bindest, lovest. | | Binde(n), love(n). |
| | 3. Bindeth } loveth. or bint, } | | |
| Past. | 1. Bond, loved(e). | | |
| | 2. Bounde } lovedest. or bond, } | | Bounde(n) } loved(e) or bond, } or loved. |
| | 3. Bond, loved(e). | | |
| Subj. Pres. | 1. Binde, love. | | |
| | 2. Binde, love. | | Binde(n), love(n). |
| | 3. Binde, love. | | |
| Past. | 1. Bounde, loved(e). | | |
| | 2. Bounde, loved(e)st or loved. | | Bounde(n), loved(e)n or loved. |
| | 3. Bounde, loved(e). | | |
| Imperative. | 2. Bind, love. | | Binde(th) or bind, love(th). |
| Infinitive. | Binde(n), love(n). | | |
| Gerund. | Binden(e) or binde, loven(e) or love. | | |
| Partic. Pres. | Binding(e), loving(e). | | |
| Partic. Past. | (Y)bounde(n), (y)loved. | | |

Notice that in a weak verb the past tense, indic., 1st and 3rd sing., ends almost always in *-e*, attached to *-ed*, *-d*, or *-t*; but the participle past does not. On the other hand, in a strong verb, there is no final *-e* in the past tense, indic., 1st and 3rd sing.; but in the participle past it is very common, alternating with *-en*.

The participle past of any verb may have *y-* or *i-* prefixed: it represents the Old Eng. *ge-*.

The prefix *to-* (intensive) is not uncommon: *torente*, rent in pieces; *tohewe*, hewn in pieces; *togo*, quite gone, dispersed.

ANOMALOUS VERBS.

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| I. Indic. Pres. Sing. | | 1. am. |
| | | 2. art. |
| | | 3. beth, is. |
| | Plur. | been, ben, are(n). |
| | Imperat. Plur. | beeth, beth. |
| | Partic. Past, | been, ben. |
| II. Indic. Pres. Sing. | | can (I know). |
| | Plur. | conne(n). |
| | Past, | coude (knew, could). |
| | Partic. Past, | couth. |
| III. Indic. Pres. | | dar (I dare). |
| | Past, | dorste. |
| IV. Indic. Pres. Sing. | | may (I may). |
| | Plur. | mowe(n). |
| | Subj. Pres. Sing. | mowe. |
| | Plur. | mowen. |
| V. Indic. Pres. Sing. | | 1. moot (I must, I may). |
| | | 2. moot, must. |
| | | 3. moot. |
| | Plur. | mote(n). |
| | Past, | moste. |

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| VI. Indic. Pres. Sing. | shal ; wil, wol. |
| Plur. | shullen, shul ; wolen, wilen. |
| Past, | sholde, shulde ; wolde. |

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| VII. Indic. Pres. Sing. 1. | woot, wot (I know). |
| 2. | wost. |
| 3. | woot, wot. |
| Plur. | wite(n), woot (<i>rarely</i>). |
| Past, | wiste. |
| Partic. Past, | wist. |

SOME GRAMMATICAL NOTES.

The plural of Nouns. The plural of nouns is mostly in *-es*—the Old Eng. *-as*. Some nouns make no change for the plural, such as sheep, score, yeer, hors, neet (*cattle*), and (sometimes) thing. Romance nouns, following French rule, add *s* (*z*), as servants, parements (*rich cloth hangings*), palmers. Even in Chaucer's time the plural in syllabic *-es* was giving way to the modern *s* ; words of more than one syllable, whether noun or adjective, usually add *s* only, and many words of one syllable ending in a liquid or a dental.

The Relative.—*That* followed at an interval by *he* is equivalent to *who*, by *his* to *whose*, and by *him* to *whom* ; e.g.—

“A worthy man,
That, fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he lovede chivalrye.”

“Al were they sore yhurt, and namely¹ oon ¹ *especially*.
That with a spere was thirled his brestboon.”

“I saugh today a cors yborn to chirche
That now, on Monday last, I saugh *him* wirche.”

That (alone) is the ordinary relative in Middle English ; *who* is used only as an interrogative.

The Indefinite Pronoun.—*Me, men* (for man) is followed by a singular verb; it answers to *one*, Fr. *on*: e.g., “Men moot yeve silver.”

Adverbs.—The characteristic ending of the adverb is in *-e*. Other endings are *-e(n)* and *-es* (modern *-ee*), as—*bifore(n)*, *thennes*. Some end in *-ly*, or *-ely*: in the latter case the *e* must always be heard, as—*trewily*. Notice that the adverb *ther* in Chaucer more frequently means *where* than *there*; and that *theras* is equivalent to *where that*, *where*. *As-now*, or *as-nouthe*, is equal to *now*, *at present*; *af-newe* is equal to *newly*. *What . . . what* = *partly . . . partly*. *Therto* = *besides*, *in addition*.

Prepositions.—*With, after, of, &c.*, in Chaucer, sometimes seem misplaced, as—“to shorte with the weye,” “Troilus his Pandare after sente,” “mo than Ovyde made of mencionn,” “mater of to wryte.” The Northern (or Scandinavian) *til* for *to* is commonly used before a vowel. *Atte* is used for *at the*.

Negatives.—With Chaucer two or more negatives give emphasis to a negative statement. On this point Latin rule, which now obtains, was not imported till about Dryden's time. Chaucer has—

“He never yet no vileinye ne sayde
In al his lyf unto no maner wight.”

Very often in Chaucer the negative *ne* requires to be run into the following verb; and this combination of negative and verb often shows in the spelling. Thus we find *nam* for *ne am*, *nis* for *ne is*, *nas* for *ne was*, *nere* for *ne were*, *noot* or *not* for *ne noot*; and similarly *nahde* (had not), *nil* (will not), *nohde* (would not), *niste* (knew not).

Other contractions.—Chaucer writes *theech* for *thce ich* (thrive I = as I hope to thrive); *tabyde* for *to abide*; *this* for *this is*; *bit* for *biddeth*; *stait* for *standeth*; *uprit* for

upriseth ; *wiltow* for *wilt thou* ; *wher* for *whether* ; *nerre* (nere, ner) for *nearer* ; *bet* for *better* ; *mo* for *more* ; *namo* or *namore* for *no more* ; *o* or *oo* for *one* ; *the tother* for *that* (the) *other* ; *tharmes* for *the arms* ; *thariraille* for *the arrival* ; *nos-kinnes* for *nous kinnes* = of no kind ; *tho* for *those* ; *thilke* for *the like*, *that same*, *that* ; *swich* for *so like*, *such* ; *nof* for *nor of*.

II. HIS DICTION.

Chaucer, no doubt, knew and spoke with ease French as well as English. If, as his name would indicate, he was of Norman extraction, his ancestors in England from the time of the Conquest had spoken French. But it should not be forgotten that both the English and the Normans were of one Teutonic stock. Chaucer was not a Frenchman though he spoke French, and though some of his ancestors had known no other language. The brilliance of his poetry is not to be attributed to a French temperament, but to an English temperament disciplined in French method.

In Chaucer's youth French was still a familiar language at the English Court, but English was fast spreading among the ruling classes, being forced upwards among them from the level of the common people, the children of the soil. The history of the struggle between French and English is concisely told by Dr Sweet. "For a long time the two languages," he says, "kept almost entirely apart. The English of 1200¹ is almost as free from French words as the English of 1050 ; and it was not till after 1300 that French words began to be adopted wholesale into English. Meanwhile English was steadily gaining the upper hand. In 1258 we find it officially employed in the Proclamation

¹ "In all Middle-English writings before 1250 the number of French words probably does not exceed 500," says Dr O. F. Emerson.

of Henry III. In the next century French gradually fell into disuse even among the aristocracy. In 1362 English was introduced in the courts of law instead of French. About the same time English took the place of French as the vehicle of instruction in schools."

The effect of French influence on the Middle English of Chaucer was twofold, but in very unequal degrees: it is very apparent in the vocabulary, in which we may include pronunciation; but it is also visible, though only to a slight extent, in the syntax. "Soon after the Conquest," remarks Dr Sweet, "English ceased for several centuries to be the language of the higher purposes of life, and sank almost to a mere peasants' dialect. So when English came again into general use, it had lost a great part of its higher vocabulary, for which it had to use French words, such as *sir*, *duke*; *captain*, *army*, *battle*; *sermon*, *preach*. Even when the English word was kept, the same idea was often expressed by a French word, whence numerous synonyms, such as *work* and *labour*, *weak* and *feeble*. . . . French had also some influence on English syntax, and many French idioms and phrases were adopted into spoken English through imitation of the aristocracy. On the whole, however, the influence of French on the grammatical structure of English was not great."

Words of French origin may be counted in Chaucer by the hundred; and most, if not all of them, convey (at least occasionally) the foreign accent. Here are a few: *Achat* (buying), *purchasing* (conveyancing), *habergeoun* (coat of mail), *gipser* (pouch), *poraille* (poor folk), *vitaille* (victuals), *aguiler* (needle-case), *cornemuse* (bagpipe), *blankmanger*, *wastel breed* (gateau, cake-bread), *tretys* (long or straight), *fetis* (neat), *cas* (event), *chance*, *avaunce*, *acquitaunce*, *chivachye* (expedition on horseback), *champartye* (equality, *lit.*, divided field), *chisels* (scissors), *colpons* (portions), *corage*

(heart), noblesse, prowess, delitable, desirous, despitous, countretaille (counter-tally, reply), darreyne (decide), pleasance, aventure, debonairely, boteler (butler). A few specimens of French phrase and idiom occurring in Chaucer may also be given: "At point devys" (with great exactness), "per aventure," "par cas" (by chance), "bele chere" (beautiful or excellent fare), "bel amy" (good friend), "in daunger" (in control, *or* within jurisdiction), "upon peyne" (under penalty), "withoute more respyt" (without more delay), "in good point" (in good condition), "at poynt" (ready), "for the maistrye" (in regard to authority), "par amour" (for love), "no fors" (no matter), "nam but" (am only), "nas but" (was only); and the pupil may study for both the diction and the construction the following couplet:—

"Ther nas baillif, ne herd, ne other hyne
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne"

(*i.e.*, there was neither bailiff, nor shepherd, nor other servant on the estate, whose cunning and collusion he was not aware of).

Of Chaucer's bilingualism (*i.e.*, his habit of using two words, one French the other English, to convey the same meaning) a few more examples than those given above may be appended: "Endyte and make," "lord and sire," "swinken and labour," "poynaunt and sharp," and a double instance in the line—

"Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye"

(*i.e.*, truthfulness and politeness).

It would be wrong to imagine that Chaucer imported French word or idiom with the effect of corrupting or enriching (according to the view one takes of the matter) the English language. He used what was current, and

indeed was more sparing in the use of French terms than most of his contemporaries.

Chaucer's language, notwithstanding the admixture of foreign words, is still, on the whole, as purely native in its vocabulary as the language of Shakespeare, or Wordsworth, or even Tennyson. In the Prologue to the *Tales* the foreign element (mostly French) is only 12 or 13 per cent. In the first 100 words of the Prologue (ll. 1-14) the number of foreign words amounts to 18. Spenser has good warrant in calling his great predecessor "the well of English undefiled."

CHAUCER'S VERSIFICATION.

THE works of Chaucer that have come down to us (a few have apparently perished) are, for much the greater part, in verse; but they also include four important specimens of his prose. These are (1) A translation of Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*; (2) A treatise on the Astrolabe, written for the use of "litel Lewis my sone"; (3) *The Tale of Melibeus*; and (4) *The Persones Tale*. The two last mentioned are part and parcel of *The Canterbury Tales*, and are usually bound up with that work. They are not, however, in the ordinary sense of the word, at all poetical, though it has been pointed out (as Prof. Saintsbury says) that "there is a sort of *underground* blank verse in the opening of Chaucer's 'Melibeus.'"¹ Chaucer's prose is by no means the original and wonderful thing that his verse is.

Chaucer's system of versification (by metre and rime) is French; but the traditional system (by rhythm and alliteration), known as Old English or Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse, was quite popular, in the practice of Langland, all through Chaucer's lifetime; and the taste for it continued for at least a century after Chaucer's death, that is down to the time of the Northern poet, William Dunbar.

The Romance system of versification crept into England about the time of the Norman Conquest, and had acquired a good foothold in the South and East by the beginning of the thirteenth century. Before Chaucer appeared, the

rimed lyrics of Laurence Minot, in celebration of Edward III.'s victories in France, were well known and much appreciated by the public ; but it was the large practice and exquisite art of Chaucer that gave deep and lasting root to the new style of versifying in English poetry. The old alliterative system, though it had been more or less in continual use for nearly a thousand years, that is from the arrival in our island of the Anglo-Saxons, has been lost to the ear of the public for now four centuries. It was partly the fuller and more varied capabilities of the new system, and partly Chaucer's success in the use of it, that produced the change.

All Chaucer's verse¹ proceeds on iambic feet. The iambic foot (two syllables, with the accent on the second: symbol *xa*) has all along been the favourite foot in English poetry. He employs it in two or (more correctly) three different measures—tetrameter (4*xa*), pentameter (5*xa*), and, but only once, in a burlesque of the ballad measure, a combination of tetrameters and trimeters (4*xa*, 3*xa*). *The Romaunt of the Rose*, *The Book of the Duchesse*, and *The Hous of Fame* are written in riming couplets of iambic tetrameters. All the rest of Chaucer's longer poems—*The Parlement of Foules*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The Legend of Good Women*, and all the verse of *The Canterbury Tales* except the burlesque of *Sir Thopas*—are written in rimed stanzas or riming couplets of iambic pentameters.² Chaucer's favourite stanza (in seven lines, with the rhimes falling—*ababbcc*) came to be known as rime royal, after the Scottish King James's use of it in *The King's Quair*. Thus the octosyllabic couplet

¹ The three trochaic lines in Chaucer's *Proverbe* are not taken into account.

² This statement leaves out of account a few unimportant stanzas written in a combination of pentameters and tetrameters, which occur in *The Complaint of Anélida*.

(though introduced before Chaucer's time), rime royal, and the heroic couplet, forms of verse which have been long in vogue in English poetry, and which must always be familiar in English ears from the wealth they carry, were established in our literature by Chaucer. For these he was indebted to French poets, especially to Guillaume de Lorris and Guillaume de Machault. The principal forms of verse which came in after Chaucer's day are blank verse, the sonnet, the Spenserian measure, the elegiac quatrain, and ottava rima.

No one can now deny with justice that Chaucer, by long practice, came to be an accomplished metrist with a well-trained ear. If his lines sound inharmoniously, it is not their fault, but the fault of the printer or the reader. The most musical of instruments will produce discord in the hands of a beginner, but the fault is the beginner's. It requires some knowledge and practice to bring out the music. Cowley thought Chaucer rough and rude, and "not worth receiving." Even Dryden, whose penetration went deeper than Cowley's, called him "a rough diamond." It is amusing to read Dryden's apologetic eulogy of Chaucer's verse: "The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us; but 'tis like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was *auribus istius temporis accommodata*: They who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical; and it continues so even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lydgate and Gower, his contemporaries: There is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. 'Tis true I cannot go so far as he who published the last edition¹ of him; for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine: But this opinion is not

¹ Speght's, 1687.

worth confuting; 'tis so gross and obvious an error, that common sense (which is a rule in everything but matters of Faith and Revelation) must convince the reader, that equality of numbers in every verse which we call *heroick* was either not known, or not always practised, in Chaucer's age. It were an easie matter to produce some thousands of his verses which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronounciation can make otherwise. We can only say that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the first. We must be children before we grow men. . . . Our numbers were in their nonage till [Waller and Denham] appeared." To all this it may, in a word, be replied that, given the true text of Chaucer (*not* "Adam Scriveyn's" defective version), and fairplay in the reading of it, it is as harmonious as Dryden's own. And that is saying a great deal. It is, of course, not so easy to read. One kind of instrument may be more difficult to play than another, and yet produce exquisite music.

The most noticeable peculiarity of Chaucer's verse is the abundance of feminine rimes. This gives a hypermetrical syllable to the line. It is most frequently caused by unaccented final *-e*. The rule in reading Chaucer is, to sound final *-e* wherever it occurs, and *always* at the end of a line. We no longer sound final *-e*, because our language is no longer phonetic: final *-e* with us, a survival from Chaucer's times, is only retained to mark the pronounciation—to show that the vowel preceding it is a long one. Other, but much less common, hypermetrical syllables in Chaucer's verse are *-es*, *-en*, and *-ed*. As a rule they, too, are to be sounded wherever they occur. Notice, however, that within a line final or medial *e* is often elided or slurred, especially in the latter case in the combinations *er*, *eth*, *el*, and *en*. The *e* is

seldom elided or slurred in *es* and *ed*. The letter *g* is also often slurred before a vowel or mute *h*. Final *e* is often elided, and *e* in final *-el*, *-en*, and *-er* is often slurred, before words beginning with a vowel or with silent *h*, and before the words *he* (his, him, hir, hem, &c.), *hath*, *hadde*, *han*, &c.), *herv*, and *how*. Final *e* is pretty often silent in *hadde*, *were*, and *wolde*, independently of the following word. It is sometimes written in the personal pronouns (*oure*, *youre*, *hire*, &c.), but remains silent. It is silent in *these* (these), and often silent in *more* and *time*.

A considerable part of Chaucer's diction is French, and carries the French accent. The tendency, however, was manifesting itself to pronounce words of Romance origin with an English accent: Chaucer had therefore his choice of two ways in the pronunciation of words like *honour*, *nature*, *curage*, &c. He could say honour or honour; and he said now the one and now the other, leaving the position of the accent very much to the requirement of the metre. The beginner should remember that Chaucer's spelling is phonetic, and the metre should give him confidence in placing the accent.

The next most noticeable feature of Chaucer's metre, after the abundance of his feminine rimes, is the frequency with which one strong syllable is made to do duty for a foot at the beginning of a line. There is no doubt that when Chaucer first began the poet's trade he was more desirous to express sense than sound, and was now and again apologetic for his metrical failings: he prays Apollo, in *The House of Fame*, to make his rime

“sumwhat agreáble
Though som vers faile in a silláble.”

But to fail in a syllable may be (as it generally is in

(Chaucer) a beauty rather than a blemish, as the following couplets will show :—

(a) “ And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here
Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere ;”

(b) “ For him was lever have at his beddes heed
Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed.”

Chaucer makes occasional use of the cæsure. This is a pause within a line which gives the same kind of freedom for an extra syllable as the pause at the line-end allows.

CHAUCER'S PRONUNCIATION.

MODERN English spelling is unphonetic, though, of course, not wholly so. It has not followed the changes of pronunciation. It has, now for centuries, been caught and kept in stereotyped forms by the printer, and is no longer a phonetic representation of spoken English. It was otherwise with the spelling of Old and Middle English. The Old English scribe wrote as he spoke; and the forms of Middle English too were fairly phonetic, only their pronunciation, due to French influence, is on a Latin basis (*e.g.*, *natûre*, *natûra*). A good rule, therefore, for the beginner is to pronounce the words of Chaucer according to their forms, giving the letters their Latin value. The accent, or syllable-stress,—following, for the most part, in words of Romance (*i.e.*, Fr.-Lat.) origin, the Latin quantity,—will generally be made out from the metre. But notice that the metre will often require the accent to shift; thus in one line it may be *resoun* and in another *raison*, here *corage* and there *courage*. In every case the rhythm is to be preserved. To do this, it will sometimes be necessary to drop final *-e* where, but for the demand of the metre, it would be pronounced. [Notice, however, that most of the MSS. of Chaucer that exist were written in the century after Chaucer's death, when final *-e* was gradually falling out of use, and that the "seriveyn" sometimes incorrectly omitted and sometimes incorrectly inserted it—very much according

to his own whim, and very much, of course, to the detriment of the metre. "Practically," says Dr Skeat, "the reader should always insert it when necessary for the metre."]

The following few notes on the probable pronunciation of Middle English may be useful :—

Sound final *-e* like the vowel in *err*. (French *-é* has survived in *-y*, as *privy* : Chaucer has *oundy*, Fr. *ondé*.)

Sound *aa* (achaat, estaat) like the long *a* in *father*.

Sound *oo* (and *o* long) like the *o* in *note*. It is never *u*, as in *shoe*, in Middle English.

Sound *gh* like the German *ch*, or the Scotch—as in *loch*. [It is probable, however, that the Norman-French pronunciation (like the modern) elided the *gh* altogether as a harsh barbarism, and pronounced as in *delite* (delight)—where, indeed, the *gh* has no right to be.]

Sound *ai* and *ay* almost as the 1st personal pronoun *I*. (Cf. Cockney pronunciation of 'Daily Mail'—Dily Mīl.)

Sound *ea*, *ee*, *ei*, *ey*, *eo*, and *oe* (and long *e*) all like *ea* in *great*. [Cf. Irish, formerly English, pronunciation of *ease* (aise), *receice* (resaive).]

Sound *au* and *aw* like the diphthong in *house*. (Cf. the Latin, in *claudio*.)

Sound *c*, as with us, hard before the masculine vowels, soft before the feminine. Neither *c*, nor *s*, nor *t* was ever the coarse sibilant *sh*, as in our *vicious*, *vision*, *absolution*, but *vi-si-on*, *ab-so-lu-ci-oun*. (Milton was the last great poet to refuse recognition of the coarse sibilant :

"I took | it for | a fa | ery vi | sion.")

ch and *cch*, as in *rich* and *fetch*.

h, initial, was often silent, as with us ; and, final, it was a faint guttural gradually dying out.

i long, or *y* long, was pronounced as the Latin *i*, almost the name sound of *e*.

ou and *ow*, as the modern *oo* in *good*.

ough : (1) as in *ugh* ! (2) as in long *o* followed by the guttural

ch. [Scotch pronunciations both as in (1) *ph-ughe*, (2) *fōcht* (*fōcht*).]

r, always distinctly heard, as in Scotch.

s, final, oftener sharp than now.

u and *v* interchange; *w* a substitute for *u*.

In *wr* sound the *w* (our *oo*); in *kn*, sound the *k*.

It may, however, be remarked that Chaucer may be read for the sake of his poetry without attempting to give, what is only probable at best, the (so-called) true Chaucerian pronunciation. We read Shakespeare with the modern pronunciation, and not with Shakespeare's. Even the Scotch of Burns is pronounced by Scottish readers with all the variety of pronunciation that still exists among the Scottish dialects. It is to be noticed, too, that the different Chaucerian MSS. (mostly of the fifteenth century) reveal differences of spelling, which prove differences of pronunciation on the part at least of the scribes that wrote them. However Chaucer's words are pronounced, whether according to the elaborate rules laid down by Mr Ellis or according to modern custom, it will, of course, be necessary to preserve the metre and the rime.

PART I.

THE CANTERBURY TALES

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

CHAUCER'S greatest work is known as *The Canterbury Tales*. It is the best, the longest, and the last expression of his genius. The first really great poem in our language, it occupies a place among the masterpieces of English literature which come nearest to the wonderful creations of Shakespeare and of Milton. Two centuries were to pass before another poem worthy of comparison with it was to appear, and part at least of the *Faerie Queene* was inspired by the poetry of Chaucer.

All Chaucer's best qualities shine forth in *The Canterbury Tales*—freshness of natural description, vivid portraiture, genial satire, simple pathos, irresistible humour, and an ease of narration which never hurries and yet is never dull. With rare power of observation, ample knowledge, and a heart that knew the world and yet was ever young and brimful of youthful feeling, he unites a grace of familiar expression which makes him the first and foremost of English story-tellers.

Long though it is and in mere length it bulks nearly as much as all Chaucer's other writings taken together—the poem of *The Canterbury Tales* is still only the fragment of a projected work which, if finished, would probably have been five or six times longer. The grand idea or scheme of it first entered his mind about the year 1385 or 1386, when he was busy with *The Legend of Good Women*; and it seems to have been directly suggested by an actual pilgrimage which the poet himself made about that time to Canterbury. Once suggested, it was taken

up *con amore*. The *Legend* was laid aside unfinished, and he was still apparently at work on the more ambitious and congenial task when, in 1400, death surprised him in his newly leased garden-house at Westminster.

Before the general scheme of *The Canterbury Tales* occurred to Chaucer he had written some poems which, as he found them suitable to the scheme, he pressed into its service. Such were the *Lyf of St Cecylye*, adapted to become the Second Nonnes Tale; the history of Grisilde, allocated to the Clerk; *Palamon and Arcite*, utilised as the basis of the Knights Tale; and the story of Custance, given to the Man of Lawe.

The plan of *The Canterbury Tales*, the characters, the style, and the best of the stories, are distinctly English. Chaucer may have borrowed the plot of every tale he tells, and the sources of many of them are well known; yet such is his treatment of French *fabliaux* or Italian legend that the story becomes thoroughly assimilated in the process of translation: a few simple touches, and it begins to wear a native air, and at last looks like an original production.

The popular title of the work, *The Canterbury Tales*, is somewhat misleading. It implies merely a collection of tales in some way connected with Canterbury. But the work, even in its unfinished state, is something more than that. It is a poet's story of a pilgrimage to Canterbury, including in organic connection within its ample scope a variety of characters, stories, conversations, and incidents. It presents a succession of scenes in the comedy of life, without a plot, but not without unity, and full of dramatic interest. Its unity of design and its dramatic interest lift it far above the *Decameron* as a work of art, though it is commonly said that the *Decameron* suggested *The Canterbury Tales*.

Chaucer never mentions the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, though he may have known it. Its dramatic interest, whether of characterisation or of incident, is of the slightest. A party of seven ladies and three gentlemen, all young, rich, and mutually connected by the ties of family or friendship, arrange one evening, at the close of divine service in New St Mary's, to flee from the plague-stricken city of Florence to the safety of the neighbouring country. There they pass the time together, strolling about villa garden-grounds and chatting, or sitting in the

meadows and telling stories. Their other amusements are feasting, singing, and dancing. Each tells one short story, or "novel," chiefly of amorous intrigue, on each of the ten days devoted to story-telling, and when the number of "novels" has run to a hundred, they return, after an absence of fifteen days, to Florence, and at St Mary's, where they first met, the party finally separates. The interest lies entirely in the stories, which are beautifully told, though they are often an affront to morality: there is scarcely any attempt at character-drawing, either in the stories or of those that tell them; no adventure of any note befalls the party; and the circumstances in which they meet are selfishly arranged and morally unwholesome.

The Canterbury Tales, on the other hand, are told in pleasant circumstances and with a wholesome environment. As Mr Henry Morley has well said, "Chaucer substituted for the courtly Italian ladies and gentlemen who withdrew from fellowship with the afflicted world to the isolated joys of a conventional paradise, as large a group as he could form of English people, of rank widely differing, chance-met at a holiday season in hearty human fellowship together. Instead of setting them down to lounge in a garden, he mounted them on horseback, set them on the highroad, and gave them somewhere to go and something to do."

It is, however, unnecessary to suppose that Chaucer was indebted to Boccaccio for the plan of his great work. There is nothing very original in the idea of a company of people amusing themselves by telling stories in turn. It is and has been the practice of every fireside. The idea is as obvious as it is old, and as fresh as it is familiar. In literature its range is from beyond the time of *The Seven Wise Masters*, long antecedent to the time of either Chaucer or Boccaccio, down even to our own day. Longfellow, Dickens, William Morris have all recently conjured with it; and in regard to the happy idea of a pilgrimage or holiday-journey as a framework for stories, it was one which Chaucer could hardly have missed; for pilgrimages were a popular and common form of holiday-making in mediæval England, and Greenwich, where Chaucer had his home from 1385 to 1399, was probably the best place on the Canterbury route for the observation of pilgrims. That he went on occasional pilgrimages himself there can be no doubt.

THE general plan of *The Canterbury Tales* is properly set forth in the Prologue. A party of thirty representative pilgrims of both sexes, diverse callings, various ages from twenty to sixty, different dispositions and characters, and all ranks from abbot and knight to cook and ploughman, ride forth one fine morning in the latter half of April from the yard of the Tabard Inn at Southwark, to go, under the guidance of Harry Bailly, the brawny blustering landlord, to the shrine of St Thomas, the tomb of the murdered Archbishop Becket, at Canterbury. They propose to lighten the journey with stories on the way, each pilgrim to tell two, and to return together, telling stories as before, to a great supper at the Tabard, where the best story-teller is to be the guest of the other pilgrims.

2. *Diffusion of a ...*
formation of diphthongs
3. *lengthening of vowel in*
open position
THE PROLOGUE,

Setting forth the Scheme of the Canterbury Tales.

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures swote *swete*
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour,
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth *wood*
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye
That slepen al the night with open ye 10
(So priketh hem Nature in hir corages)—
Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
To ferne halwes couthe in sondry londes,
shires And specially from every shires ende
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende
The holy blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seke.

Bifel that in that sesoun on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay 20
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At night was come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a compainye

Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
 In felawshipe; and pilgrims were they alle
 That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.

The chambres and the stables weren wyde;
 And wel we weren esed atte beste.
 And, shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
 30 So hadde I spoken with hem everichon
 That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
 And made forward erly for to ryse
 To take our wey theras I yow devyse.

Thus al assembled was this compainye
 In Southwerk at this gentil hostelrye
 That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
 But now is tyme to yow for to telle
 How that we baren us in that ilke night
 Whan we were in that hostelrye alight;
 40 And after wol I telle of our viage
 And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.

Greet chere made our hoste us everichon;
 And to the souper sette he us anon,
 And servede us with vitaille atte beste.
 Strong was the wyn, and wel to, drinke us leste.
 A semely man our hoste was withalle
 For to hau been a marshal in an halle;
 A large man he was with eyen stepe;
 A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe;
 50 Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel ytaught,
 And of manhede him lakkede right naught.
 Eek therto he was right a mery man.
 And after souper playen he bigan,

And spak of mirth amonges othre thinges
 When that we hadde maad our rekeninges,
 And seyde thus—"Lo, lordinges! trewely
 Ye ben to me right welcome hertely;
 For, by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
 I saugh nat this yeer so mery a compaignye 60
 At ones in this herbergh as is now:
 Fayn wolde I don yow mirth, wiste I how.
 And of a mirth I am right now bithoght
 To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
 Ye goon to Caunterbury (God yow spede!
 The blisful martir quyte yow your mede!)
 And wel I woot as ye goon by the weye
 Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye,—
 For, trewely, confort ne mirth is noon
 To ryde by the weye domb as a stoon; 70
 And therfor wol I maken yow disport,
 As I seyde erst, and doon yow som comfort.
 And, if yow lyketh alle by oon assent
 Now for to stonden at my jugement
 And for to werken as I shal yow seye—
 Tomorrow, when ye ryden by the weye,
 Now, by my fader soule that is deed,
 But ye be merye I wol yeve yow myn heed!
 Hold up your hond withouten more speche."
 Our counseil was not longe for to seche. 80
 Us thoughte it has nat worth to make it wys;
 And graunted him withouten more avys,
 And bad him seye his verdict as him leste.

"Lordinges," quod he, "now herkneþ for the beste;
 But take it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn:
 This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,—
 That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye

In this viage, shal telle tales tweye
 To Caunterburyward (I mene it so)
 And homward he shal tellen othre two 90
 Of aventures that whylom han bifalle;
 And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,
 That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
 Tales of best sentence and most solas,
 Shal han a soper at our aller cost
 Here in this place sitting by this post
 Whan that we come ageyn from Caunterbury.
 And, for to maken yow the more mery,
 I wol myselven gladly with yow ryde
 Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde. 100
 And whoso wol my jugement withseye
 Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
 And, if ye vouchesauf that it be so, *he is vouchesauf*
 Tel me anon withouten wordes mo, *he vouchesauf*
 And I wol erly shape me therfore."

This thing was graunted, and our othes swore
 With ful glad herte; and preyden him also
 That he wold vouchesauf for to doon so, *Inf.*
 And that he wolde been our governour, *Inf.*
 And of our tales juge and reportour, 110
 And sette a souper at a certeyn prys,
 And we wold reuled been at his devys
 In heigh and lowe. And thus, by oon assent,
 We ben ^{are} acorded to his jugement.
 And therupon the wyn was fet anon: *φ. d*
 We dronken, and to reste wente echon
 Withouten any lenger taryinge.

Amorwe, whan that day bigan to springe,

Uproos our hoste, and was our aller cok,
And gadrede us togidre alle in a flok ; 120

And forth we riden a litel more than pas
Unto the watering of Seint Thomas.

And there our host bigan his hors areste,
And seyde—"Lordinges, herkneth, if yow leste.

Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.

If evensong and morwesong acorde,

Lat see now who shal telle the firste tale.

As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,

Whoso be rebel to my jugement

Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent. 130

Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twinne :

He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.

Sir Knight," quod he, "my maister and my lord,

Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord.

Comth neer," quod he, "my lady Prioress ;

And ye, Sir Clerk, lat be your shamfastnesse,

Ne studieth nat. Ley hond to, every man."

Anon to drawen every wight bigan, Inf.

And, shortly for to tellen, as it was,

Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas, 140

The soth is this—the cut fil to the knight ;

Of which ful blythe and glad was every wight ;

And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun

By forward and by composicioun

As ye han herd ;—what nedeth wordes mo ?

And, whan this gode man saugh it was so,

As he that wys was, and obedient

To kepe his forward by his free assent,

He seyde—"Sin I shal biginne the game,

What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name !

Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye." 150

And with that word we riden forth our weye;
 And he bigan with right a mery chere
 His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

NOTES.

1. *Whan that Aprille*. The Pilgrims were gathered in the Tabard Inn, on the 16th April, in the evening. The Pilgrimage began next morning. On the second day of the Pilgrimage, just before the Man of Law was called upon for a tale, the time is definitely marked as

“the eighteteethe day
 Of April, that is messenger to May.”

The reader is free to suppose the year to be 1386. (Cf. the opening of *The Thrissil and the Rois*.)

his shoures. “His” is both the masc. and the neut. form, but April is probably personified here—like Zephyrus, four lines below. One of the authorities, the Hengwrt MS., has “Auerylle”: in both Fr. and Lat. April is masc.

3. *Bathed every vygne*. That is, every stalk or stem. Cf.—

“Welcum, support of every rute and vane!
 Welcum, confort of every frute and grane!”
 —Gavin Douglas (in praise of Spring).

4. So Thomson, in *The Seasons* (*Spring*, ll. 653-670).

7. *the yonge sonne*. Not yet more than a month old. The year is reckoned from the vernal equinox, in March; since we reckoned from January, September, &c., are misnomers.

8. *in the Ram his halfe cours*. That is, the *second* half. The sun entered the sign of Aries a little before the middle of March (O.S.), and left it to enter Taurus a little before the middle of April. In April the sun ran a half-course in the Ram and a half-course in the Bull. The time here referred to might be expressed in the words of James Thomson, the last poet of note to mark time in the astrological way:—

“At last from Aries rolls the bounteous Sun,
 And the bright Bull receives him.”

—*The Seasons* (*Spring*)

12. *Thun longen folk to gon on pilgrimages.* The first word here summarises the preceding adverbial clauses of time. Pilgrimages were a form of holiday-making in medieval times. Popular places of resort were Walsingham (v. Erasmus's *Pergrinatio*), Canterbury, Bury St Edmunds, in England; Whithorn, Melrose, Scone, in Scotland. "I made my visitaciouns," says the Wife of Bath—

"To vigilies, and to processiouns,
To prechings eek, and to thise pilgrimages,
To playes of miracles, and mariages"—

all popular forms of holiday-making in the fourteenth century. Dunbar the Scottish poet's "Wife" gives the same testimony:—

"I suld at fairis be found, new faceis to spy;
At playis, and preichingis, and pilgrimages greit."

The national holiday time is now August and September, not, as in Chaucer's day, April and May. "With the modern system of agriculture, which requires for the green crop a continuance of that attention which, in the earlier months, was given to the sowing of the grain, it would be ruinous for the husbandman to go holiday-making in spring. But in Chaucer's day—half a millennium ago—potatoes and turnips were unknown in the country, and when the small farmer had 'rattled' his seed over the brown furrows in March, he was free both in mind and body to mount his mare, and make one with his brother the parson in a holiday-trip to Canterbury" (Hugh Hali-burton: *For Puir Auld Scotland*).

13. *palmers.* They were distinguished from pilgrims in two ways: in the first place, they had visited the Holy Land, of which the "faded palm-branch in the hand" was supposed to be proof positive; and, in the second place, they never ceased journeying from one pious resort to another, thus being homeless, or—as we might say—*professional* pilgrims.

14. To distant saints well known in their various districts. Halwes = holy persons, saints. The saints were, of course, immortal; but "halwes" may be regarded as equivalent to "shrines."

17. *blisful martir.* Thomas à Becket: "blisful" has both an active and a passive (subjective and objective) meaning in Chaucer—viz., bliss-bestowing and bliss-receiving; here it means the latter, happy or sainted. Archbishop Becket was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral, December 29, 1170, at the instigation of Henry II. In 1172 Becket was canonised. "In 1220 his bones were raised from the grave in the crypt where they had been hastily buried two days after his murder,

and were deposited in a splendid shrine in the Trinity Chapel, which for three centuries continued to be the object of one of the great pilgrimages of Christendom" (Chambers's Encycl.)

20. *In Southwark at the Tabard.* Southwark (part of London since 1327) is on the south, the Surrey side of the Thames. The inn was named from its sign—a sleeveless short sack-coat, worn at one time by "noblemen in the wars," now seen only on heralds. (Notice, however, that Chaucer's ploughman wears a tabard.)

24. *Wel nyne and twenty.* Quite or exactly twenty-nine. He miscounted, however; there were thirty.

36. *gentil hostelrye.* Genteel—the word is worth reviving; respectable, first-class, excellent hotel.

37. *the Belle.* Another inn: Southwark was famous for its inns.

43. *our hoste.* His name has been preserved Harry Bailly. He is the first of the Bonifaces (as Farquhar christened them), and almost certainly the prototype of Mine Host of the Garter in Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*. He remains, however, the best-drawn innkeeper in all literature.

50. *Chepe.* Cheapside.

79. *hold up your hond.* In token of agreement.

81. *make it wys.* Think twice about it. Lit., make it a subject for long deliberation.

95. *at our aller cost.* There is a characteristic touch here: mine host has an eye to business, while professing the utmost liberality. "Our aller" means "of us all," both words being in gen. plur. See also l. 119—"our aller cok," the cock whose crowing wakened us all.

121. *riden.* Past plur.=rode, as also at l. 152. *more than pas*=faster than at a foot-pace.

122. *the watering of Seint Thomas.* Pilgrims going from London to St Thomas's used to water their horses at a stream near the second milestone.

126. If you are in the same mood this morning as you were in last night.

140. Whether it were by fortune, or fate, or chance.

144. A good instance of bilingualism.

150. *a Goddes name!* In God's name. Cf. *afield*, *abed*, &c., *on* (or *an*) being often in Old Eng.=in.

THE PILGRIMS.

CHAUCER's description of the "nine and twenty" pilgrims is the most wonderful piece of literary portrait-painting in literature. For variety of character, fulness of outline, picturesqueness of detail, brilliancy of colouring, movement, and life, it is unmatched. Apart from its poetical merits, its historical value as a faithfully realistic representation of later mediæval society in England has long been acknowledged by historian and historical romancer. Scott's use of it in *Ivanhoe* will occur to every one who has read it. Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx Abbey, for example, is confessedly a study of Chaucer's Monk.

The Pilgrims—if we take them in the order in which Chaucer, looking down from the gallery of the Tabard, noticed them as they came riding into the innyard—consisted of a Knight, accompanied by his son "a yong Squyer," and one attendant Yeoman; Madame Eglantine, the Prioress of a convent, with one of her nuns and three priests; a Monk, who seems to have been the Abbot of a monastery; a mendicant Friar; a Merchant; an Oxford Scholar; a Lawyer; a country Gentleman; five London Tradesmen—a Haberdasher, a Carpenter, a Weaver, a Dyer, and an Upholsterer—accompanied by a Cook; a sea-Captain; a Doctor; a "Wife" from the West of England, with a good business there as a manufacturer of cloth; a country Parson and his brother, the latter a small working-farmer; a meal-Miller; a Manciple, or steward, at one of the Inns of Court; a Factor, or estate-agent; a Summoner, or church-officer; and a Pardoner, or seller of Indulgences. The list numbers thirty, so that Chaucer must have miscounted them.

In addition to these thirty, all told, were the poet himself, who joined the company at the inn, and two other persons, an Alchemist and his servant, who joined the party at Bogleton

under-Blee on the last or fourth day's stage of the journey to Canterbury. The landlord of the Tabard was also of the company, as guide and umpire; and therefore the number of pilgrims at the fullest amounted to thirty-four. The Alchemist, however, as it turned out, was only a temporary member.

A **K**nicht ther was, and that a worthy man,
 That from the tyme that he first bigan
 To ryden out he lovede chivalrye,
 Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
 Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
 And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,
 As wel in Cristendom as in hethenesse,
 And ever honoured for his worthinesse. 10
 At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne;
 Ful oftetyme he hadde the bord bigonne
 Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce;
 In Lettowe hadde he reysed, and in Ruce,
 No Cristen man so ofte of his degree;
 In Gernade at the sege ^{sege} he hadde he be
 Of Algesir, and riden in Belmarye;
 At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
 Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See
 At many a noble aryve hadde he be.
 At mortal batailles had he ben fiftene,
 And foghten for our feith at Tramassene 20
 In listes thryes, and ay slayn his fo.
 This ilke worthy Knight had ben also
 Somtyme with the lord of Palatye
 Ageyn another hethen in Turkeye.
 And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
 And, thogh that he was worthy, he was wys,
 And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
 He never yet no vileinye ne sayde

In al his lyf unto no maner wight :
 He was a verray parfyt gentil Knight. 30
 But for to tellen yow of his array,
 His hors were gode, but he was nat gay ;
 Of fustian he wered a gipoun *lune*
 Al bismoter with his habergeoun ; *lune*
 For he was late ycome from his viage,
 And wente for to doon his pilgrimage. *oo*

With him ther was his sone, a yong **Squyer**, *X*
 A lovyere, and a lusty bachelor,
 With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.
 Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse. 40
 Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
 And wonderly deliver, and of gret strengthe,
 And he had ben somtyme in chivachye
 In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye, *o*
 And born him wel, as of so litel space,
 In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embroured was he, as it were a mede
 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.
 Singinge he was or floytinge al the day.
 He was as fresh as is the moneth of May. 50
 Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and wyde.
 Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde ;
 He coude songes make amd wel endyte,
 Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte.
 So hote he lovede that by nightertale
 He slepte namore than doth a nightingale.
 Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
 And carf biforn his fader at the table.

A **Yeman** hadde he, and servaunts namo
 At that tyme, for him liste ryde so ; 60

And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.
 A shef of pecok arwes, brighte and kene,
 Under his belt he bar ful thriftily ;
 Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly—
 His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe ;
 And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
 A notheed hadde he, with a broun visage.
 Of wodecraft wel coude he al the usage.
 Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,
 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler, 70
 And on that other syde a gay daggere
 Harneysed wel, and sharp as poynt of spere ;
 A Cristofre on his brest, of silver shene,
 An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene ;
 A forster was he sothly, as I gesse.

Ther was also a nonne, a **Prioeresse**,
 That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy.
 Hir gretteste ooth ne was but “ By Seynt Loy ! ”
 And she was cleped Madame Eglentyne.
 Ful wel she song the service divyne 80
 Entuned in hir nose ful semely.
 And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
 For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
 At mete wel ytaught was she withalle :
 She leet no morsel from her lippes falle,
 Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe ;
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe
 That no drope ne fille upon hir brest.
 In curteisye was set ful moche hir lest : 90
 Hir overlippe wyped she so elene
 That in hir coppe ther was no ferthing sene
 Of grece whan she drunken hadde hir draughte ;

Ful semely after hir mete she raughte ;
 And sikerly she was of greet disport,
 And ful pleasaunt, and amiable of port,
 And peyned hir to countrefete chere
 Of court, and ben estatlich of manere,
 And to ben holden digne of reverence.
 But, for to speken of hir conscience, 100
 She was so charitable and so pitous
 She wolde wepe if that she sawe a mous
 Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
 Of smale houndes had she that she fedde
 With rosted flessch, or milk and wastel breed ;
 But sore wepte she if any of hem were deed,
 Or if men smot it with a yerde smerte :
 And al was conscience and tendre herte.
 Ful semely hir wimpel ypinched was ;
 Hir nose tretys ; hir eyen greye as glas ; 110
 Hir mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed ;
 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed :
 It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe,
 For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
 Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.
 Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
 A peire of bedes gauded al with grene ;
 And theron heng a broche of gold ful shene,
 On which ther was first write a crowned A,
 And after *Amor vincit omnia*. 120
 Another Nonne with hir hadde she,
 That was hir chapeleyne ; and Preestes three.

A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also
 That unto logik hadde longe ygo.
 As lene was his hors as is a rake,
 And he nas not right fat, I undertake,

But loked holwe, and therto soberly.
 Ful thredbare was his overest courtēpy,
 For he had geten him yet no benefice ;
 Ne was so worldly for to have office :
 For him was lever have at his beddes heed
 Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
 Of Aristotle and his philosophye,
 Than robes riche, or fithel, or gay sautrye.
 But, al be that he was a philosophre,
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre ;
 But al that he mighte of his frendes hente,
 On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,
 And bisily gan for the soules preye
 Of hem that yaf him wherwith to scoleye :
 Of studie took he most cure and most hede.
 Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
 And that was seyde in form and reverence,
 And short, and quik, and ful of hy sentence.
 Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,
 And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

140

A **Monk** ther was, a fair for the maistrye,
 An outrydere, that lovede venerye,
 A manly man, to ben an abbot able.
 Ful many a deynte hors hadde he in stable,
 And, whan he rood, men mighte his bridel here
 Gingen in a whistling wind as clere
 And eek as loude as doth the chapel belle.
 Theras this lord was keper of the celle,
 The reule of Seint Maure or of Seint Beneit,
 Bycause that it was old and somdel streit,
 This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,
 And heeld after the newe world the space.
 He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen

150

That seith that hunters been noon holy men, 160
 Ne that a monk, whan he is recchelees,
 Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees
 (This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre);
 But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre.
 And I seyde his opinioun was good.
 What sholde he studie, and make himselven wood,
 Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
 Or swinken with his handes, and laboure
 As Austin bit? How shal the world be served?
 Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved! 170
 Therfore he was a pricasour aright.
 Grehoundes he hadde as swifte as fowel in flight;
 Of priking, and of hunting for the hare
 Was al his lust: for no cost wolde he spare.
 I seigh his sleeves purfiled atte hond
 With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
 And, for to festne his hood under his chin,
 He hadde of gold ywroght a curious pin—
 A love knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
 His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas, 180
 And eek his face, as it had ben anoint;
 He was a lord ful fat and in good point;
 His eyen stepe and rollinge in his heed,
 That stemed as a forneys of a leed;
 His botes souple; his hors in gret estaat;
 Now certainly he was a fair prelaat,—
 He was nat pale, as a forpynded goost;
 A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
 His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A Frere ther was, a wantown and a merye, 190
 A limitour, a ful solempne man;
 In alle the ordres foure is noon that can

So moche of daliaunce and fair langage.
 He hadde maad ful many a mariage
 Of yonge wommen at his owne cost.
 Unto his ordre he was a noble post.
 Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
 With frankeleyns overal in his contree,
 And eek with worthy wommen of the toun;
 For he had power of confessioun 200
 (As seyde himself) more than a curat,
 For of his ordre he was licentiat.
 Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
 And plesaunt was his absolucioun.
 He was an esy man to yive penaunce
 Theras he wiste to han a good pitaunce;
 For unto a povre ordre for to yive
 Is signe that a man is wel yshrive,
 For, if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt
 He wiste that a man was repentaunt,— 210
 For many a man so hard is of his herte
 He may nat wepe althogh him sore smerte;
 Therefore, instede of weping and preyeres,
 Men moot yive silver to the povre freres!
 His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves
 And pinnes, for to yiven faire wyves;
 And certeinly he hadde a mery note;
 Wel coude he singe, and pleyen on a rote;
 Of yeddinges, he bar utterly the prys.
 His nekke whyt was as the flour de lys; 220
 Therto he strong was as a champioun.
 He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,
 And everich hostiler and tappestere
 Bet than a lazar or a beggestere,—
 For unto swich a worthy man as he
 Acorded nat (as by his facultee)

To han with sike lazars acqueyntaunce :
 It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
 For to delen with no swich poraille,
 But al with riche and sellers of vitaille. 230
 And overal, theras profit sholde aryse,
 Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse ;
 Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous ;
 He was the beste beggere in his hous,
 For, thogh a widwe hadde noght o sho,℥
 So plesaunt was his "*In principio*"
 Yet wolde he have a ferthing er he wente :
 His purchas was wel better than his rente.
 And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe :
 In love dayes coude he mochel helpe ; 240
 For ther he was nat lyk a cloisterer
 With thredbare cope, as is a povre scoler,
 But he was lyk a maister or a pope ;
 Of double worsted was his semicope,
 That rounded as a belle out of the presse ;
 Somwhat he liped, for his wantownesse,
 To make his Englissh swete upon his tonge ;
 And in his harping, whan that he hadde songe,
 His eyen twinkled in his heed aright
 As don the sterres in the frosty night. 250
 This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

A Marchant was ther, with a forked berd,
 In motteleye, and hyc on hors he sat,
 Upon his heed a Flaundrish bever hat,
 His botes clasped faire and fetisly.
 His resons he spak ful solempnely,
 Souninge alway thenerees of his winning.
 He wolde the see were kept for any thing
 Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.

Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle ; 260
 This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette ;
 Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
 So estatly was he of his governaunce
 With his bargaynes and with his chevisaunce.
 Forsothe he was a worthy man withalle, *7. aad*
 But, sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle. *or*

A **Good Wyf** was ther of bisyde Bathe ;
 But she was sondeel deaf, and that was sothe.
 Of clothmaking she hadde swich an haunt *repetition*
 She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt. 270
 In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
 That to thoffring biforn hir sholde goon ;
 And, if ther dide, certeyn so wroth was she
 That she was out of alle charitee.
 Hir keverchefts ful fyne weren of ground ;
 I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
 That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
 Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed
 Ful streyte yteyd, and shoos ful moyste and newe.
 Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe. 280
 She was a worthy womman al hir lyfe ;
 Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyfe. . . .
 And thryes hadde she ben at Jerusalem ;
 She hadde passed many a straunge stream ;
 At Rome she hadde ben, and at Boloynes,
 In Galice at Seynt Jame, and at Coloyne :
 She coude moche of wandring by the weye.
 Gattothed was she, sothly for to seye.
7 amblers Upon an ambler esily she sat,
 Ywimpled wel ; and on hir heed a hat 290
 As brood as is a bokeler or a targe ;
 A foot mantel aboute hir hipen large,

And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felawship wel coude she laughe and carpe.

A Shipman was ther, woning fer by weste.
For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood upon a rouncey as he couthe, *2nd*
[Glad] in a goun of falding to the knee.
A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun. 300

The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun.
And, certainly, he was a good felawe.
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he ydrawe
From Burdeuxward whyl that the chapman sleep :
Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.
But of his craft to rekne wel his tydes,
His stremes and his daungers him bisydes,
His herberwe and his mone, his lodemenage, 310
Ther was noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake ;
With many a tempest hadde his berd ben shake.
He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,
From Gootlond to the Cape of Finistere,
And every cryke in Bretayne and in Spayne.
His barge ycleped was "The Maudelayne."

A Sergeant of Lawe, war and wys,
That often hadde ben atte parvys, *a p*
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence. 320
Discret he was, and of gret reverence :
He semed swich, his wordes were so wyse.
Justice he was ful often in assyse
By patente and by pleyen commissioun.

For his science and for his heigh renoun,
 Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
 So gret a purchasour was nowher noon;
 Al was fee simple to him in effect:
 His purchasing mighte nat ben infect.
 Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas, 330
 And yet he semed bisier than he was.
 In termes hadde he caas and domes alle
 That fro the tyme of King William were falle.
 Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing:
 Ther coude no wight pinche at his writing;
 And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
 He rood but humbly in a medle cote,
 Girt with a ceynt of silk with barres smale.
 Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

A **Frankel**eyn was in his companye; 340
 Whyt was his heed as is a dayesye.
 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
 Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn:
 To liven in delyt was ever his wone,
 For he was Epicurus owne sone
 That heeld opinioun that pleyn delyt
 Was verrailly felicitee parfyt.
 An housholdere, and that a gret, was he;
 Seint Julian he was in his contree.
 His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon; 350
 A bettre envyned man was nevere noon.
 Withoute bake mete was never his hous
 Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous
 It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke
 Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
 After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
 So chaunged he his mete and his soper.

Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe ,
And many a breem and many a lue in stewe.
Wo was his cook butif his sauce were 360 *et*
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessions, ther was he lord and sire ;
Ful oftetyme he was Knyght of the Shire.
An anlas, and a gipser al of silk, *Pove*
Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he ben, and a countour :
Was nowher such a worthy vavasour.

A good man was ther of religioun, *undone a* 370
And was a povre Persoun of a toun,
But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk, *stare*
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche ;
His parissheis devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful paciënt,
And swich he was yproved oftesythes.
Ful loth were him to cursen for his tythes ;
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute, 380
Unto his povre parissheis aboute,
Of his offring and eek of his substaunce :
He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,
But he ne lafte nat, for reyne ne thonder,
In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
The ferreste in his parisshe, moche and lyte,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf—
That first he wroghte and afterward he taughte ; 390

Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,
 And this figure he added eek therto,
 That, if gold ruste, what shal yren do?
 For, if a preest be foul on whom we truste,
 No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
 And shame it is, if a preest take keep,
 A scabbed shepherde and a clene sheep.
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive
 By his clenness how that his sheep shold live.
 He sette nat his benefice to hyre, 400
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,
 And ran to London, unto Seynte Poules,
 To seken him a chaunterye for soules,
 Or with a bretherheed to ben withholde;
 But dwelte at hoom, and kepste wel his folde,
 So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie:
 He was a shepherd, and not a mercenarie.
 And, though he holy were, and vertuous,
 He was to sinful man not despitous,
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne, 410
 But in his teching discret and benigne.
 To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse
 By good ensample—this was his bisnesse.
 But, were it any persone obstinat,
 Whatso he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
 Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
 A bettre preest, I trowe, ther nowher non is.
 He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
 Ne maked him a spyced conscience;
 But Cristes lore, and His apostles twelve, 420
 He taughte, and first he folwed it himselve.

With us ther was a **Doctour of Phisyk**.
 In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk,

To speke of phisik and of surgerye ;
 For he was grounded in astronomye. . . .
 He knew the cause of everich maladye,
 Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste or drye,
 And where engendred, and of what humour :
 He was a verrey parfit practisour.
 The cause yknowe, and of his harm the rote, 430
 Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.
 Ful redy hadde he his apotecaries
 To sende him drogges and eletuaries ;
 For ech of hem made other for to winne :
 Hir frendshipe nas nat newe to biginne.
 Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,
 And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus,
 Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien,
 Serapion, Razis, and Avicen,
 Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn, 440
 Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
 Of his diete mesurable was he,
 For it was of no superfluitee,
 But of gret norisshing and digestible.
ndai His studie was but litel on the Bible.
 In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,
 Lynced with taffata and with sendal ;
 And yet he was but esy of dispence.
 He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
 For gold in phisik is a cordial, 450
 Therefore he lovede gold in special.

The **Reve** was a sclendre colerik man.
 His berd was shave as ny as ever he can ;
 His heer was by his eres round yshorn ;
 His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn ;
ndhu Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,

Ylyk a staf—ther was no calf ysene.
 Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne ;
 Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.
 Wel wiste he by the droghte and by the reyn 460
 The yelding of his seed and of his greyn.
 His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,
 His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,
 Was hoolly in this Reves governing,
 And by his covenannt yaf the rekenyng
 Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age.
 Ther coude no man bringe him in arrerage ;
 Ther nas baillif, ne herde, nother hynde ;
 That he ne knew his sleighte and his covynne :
 They were adrad of him as of the deeth. 470
 His wonyng was ful fair upon an heeth ;
 With grene trees yshadwed was his place.
 He coude bettre than his lord purchace.
 Ful riche he was astored prively :
 His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly
 To yeve and lene him of his owne good,
 And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
 In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister ;
 He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
 This Reve sat apon a ful good stot 480
 That was a pomely gray, and highte Scot.
 A long surcote of pers upon he hade,
 And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
 Of Northfolk was this Reve of which I telle,
 Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
 Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute ;
 And ever he rood the hindreste of the route.

A gentil Maunciple was ther of a temple
 Of which achatours mighten take exemple

For to be wyse in bying of vitaille ; 490
 For, whether that he payde, or took by taille,
 Algate he wayted so in his achaat
 That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
 Now is not that of God a ful fair grace
 That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
 The wisdom of an heep of lerned men ?
 Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten
 That were of lawe expert and curious,
 Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous
 Worthy to ben stiwardes of rente and lond 500
 Of any lord that is in Engeland
 To make him live by his propre good
 In honour detteles (but he were wood)
 Or live as scarsly as him list desire ;
 And able for to helpen al a shire
 In any cas that mighte falle or happe ;
 And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe !

The Miller was a stout carl for the nones.
 Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones ;
 That preved wel, for overal ther he cam 510
 At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.
 He was short sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre.
 Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,
 Or breke it, at a running, with his heed.
 His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
 And therto brood as thogh it were a spade.
 Upon the cop right of his nose he hade
 A werte, and theron stood a tuft of heres
 Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres ;
 His nosethirles blake were and wyde. 520
 A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde.
 His mouth as wyde was as a greet forneys ;

He was a jangler and a goliardeys, ^{gouland}
 And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.
 Wel coude he stelen corn and tollen thryes;
 And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
 A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.
 A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne,
 And therewithal he broghte us out of towne.

A Sumnour was ther with us in that place, 530
 That hadde a fyr reed cherubinnes face;
 For sawcesleem he was, with yen narwe. ^{Sing. ye.}
 As hoot he was and amorous as a sparwe.
 With scalled browes blake, and piled berd,
 Of his visage children weren aferd.
 Ther nas quiksilver, litarge, ne brimstoon,
 Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
 Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
 That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,
 Ne of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes. 540
 Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
 And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood.
 Than wolde he speke and crye as he were wood.
 And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
 Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
 A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,
 That he had lerned out of som decree;
 No wonder is, he herde it al the day:
 And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay
 Can clepen "Watte!" as wel as can the pope. 550
 But whoso coude in other thing him grope,
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye.
 Ay "*Questio, quid juris?*" wolde he crye. . . .
 In daunger hadde he at his owene gyse
 The yonge girles of the diocyse,

And knew hir counseil and was al hir reed. *advice.*
 A gerland hadde he set upon his heed, *adviser.*
 As greet as it were for an alestake ;
 A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

With him ther rood a gentil **Pardoner**, 560
 Of Rouncivale, his frend and his comper,
 That streyt was comen fro the court of Rome.

Ful loude he sang *Com hider, love, to me.*
 This summour bar to him a stif burdoun ;
 Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
 This Pardoner hadde heer as yelwe as wax,
 But smothe it heng as doth a stryke of flex ;
 By unces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
 And therwith he his shuldres overspradde ;
 But thinne it lay, by culpons oon and oon ; 570
 And hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,
 For it was trussed up in his walet.

Him thoughte he rood al of the newe jet.
 Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.^d
 Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.
 A ~~vernie~~ hadde he sowed on his cappe.
 His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,
 Bretful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.

A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.
 No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have ; 580
 At smothe it was as it were late yshave.

I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.
 But of his craft,—fro Berwik unto Ware,
 Ne was ther swich another Pardoner ;
 For in his male he hadde a pilwebeer
 Which that he seyde was Our Lady veyl ;
 He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl
 Which that Seynt Peter hadde whan that he wente

Upon the see til Jesu Crist him hente ;
 He hadde a croys of lateyn ful of stones, 590
 And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
 But with thise reliques, whan that he fond
 A povre persoun dwelling upon lond,
 Upon a day he gat him more moneye
 Than that the persoun gat in monthes tweye.
 And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes,
 He made the persoun and the peple his apes.
 But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
 He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste :
 Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie, 600
 But altherbest he sang an offertorie ;
 For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
 He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge
 To winne silver, as he right wel coude :
 Therfore he sang the merierly and loude.

 NOTES.

2. *That* (followed in the next line by *he*)=who. See Grammatical Note on the Relative Pronoun, p. xxxii.

3, 4. *he lovede chivalrye*, &c. He loved his profession (as a knight or soldier) and (practised) truthfulness and politeness. Line 4 illustrates bilingualism : the two pairs of words mean each the same thing, and in each pair one is native English (Teutonic) and the other Romance (or Romanic).

5. *his lordes werre*. The king's.

9-23. *Alisaundre*—Alexandria (Egypt), won (or captured) by Pierre de Lusignan, King of Cyprus, in 1365. Chaucer's knight had offered his services. Froissart refers to this King of Cyprus as overcoming "the enemies of the faith of Jesus Christ," not only at Alexandria, but at "Layas in Armenia" and "Satalia in Turkey" (in Asia) : these places appear at l. 16 as *Lycys* and *Satalye* ; they were won from the Turks (Mohammedans), the former in 1367, the latter (Attalia, on the

Levant) "soon after 1352," says Tyrwhitt.—*Pruce*, *Lettowe*, and *Ruce* mean Prussia, Lithuania, and Russia. "When our English knights wanted employment, it was usual for them to go and serve in Pruce, or Prussia, with the knights of the Teutonic Order, who were in a state of constant warfare with their heathen neighbours in Lettow (Lithuania), Ruce (Russia), and elsewhere" (Tyrwhitt).—We pass from Turks and Tartars to Moors. *Gernade* is Granáda, the Moorish kingdom in Spain; and *Algesir*, taken from the Moors in 1344, is the modern Algeciras, near Cape Trafalgar. *Belmarye* and *Tramassene* were Moorish kingdoms in Africa—also called Belmore, Balneryne, or Benmarin, and Tremegen or Tramessen.—*The Grete See* is, of course, the Mediterranean.—*Palatye* was Palathia, in Anatolia, a Christian lordship in Turkey.

10. *the bord bigonne*. Headed the table, or dais; been placed there by the marshal of the hall. Gower (*Confessio Amantis*) speaks of a knight who "was maad beginne a middel bord."

28, 29. These lines are noteworthy for their accumulation of negatives. See Grammatical Note on Negatives, p. xxxiii.

32. *His hors were gode, but he was not gay*. Besides the horse he rode, the Squire's and the Yeoman's were also his. "Hors" is the plur. as well as the sing. form. Notice that, while the Knight was not gaily attired, his son had somehow found time to improve his personal appearance with a gorgeous vest (ll. 47, 48).

39. With curly hair, that looked as if it owed a little to art. *leyd in presse* = forced into shape (by curl paper, or curling-tongs).

40. *yecr*. This, like *hors* at l. 32, is the plur. as well as the sing. form. See Grammatical Note on the plural of Nouns, p. xxxii.

44. All in N.E. of France.

65. Ascham (in *Tocophilus*) had apparently a different opinion of peacocks' feathers in archery, preferring the feathers of the goose. "At a short but," he says, "the peacock fether doth seldome kepe up the shaft eyther ryght or level, it is so roughe and hevy." The Yeoman, however, dressed his tackle in a workmanlike manner, and his arrows, if they *were* trimmed with peacocks' feathers, did not droop, but "kept up both right and level."

78. "*By Seynt Loy!*" St Eligius; corrupted form, St Eloy or Loy. He was the patron of goldsmiths, having been a goldsmith himself.

83. *After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe*. Not with the Parisian but with the Anglo-French accent. Chaucer is not (as is vulgarly supposed) speaking slightly of the Prioress's pronunciation. She had probably been educated at the Benedictine convent (founded shortly after the Conquest at Stratford-le Bow, in the east of London. Her French was doubtless that of the English Court.

85. Behaviour at table was elaborately taught in the middle ages, as various books and treatises on courtesy show. (Vide *The Babees Book*, published by the Early English Text Society.) In Caxton's *Book of Curtesye* we have such simple rules of good-breeding at table as the following:—

“Soil not your cup, but keep it clean,
 Let no fat farthing¹ off your lip be seen. . . . ¹*speck of grease.*
 Ere that ye drink, for your own honesty,² ²*credit.*
 Your lips wipe, and cleanly look they be.
 Blow not in your drink, nor in your pottage,
 And stuff not your dish too full of bread;
 Nor bear your knife towards your visage,
 For therein is peril and mickle dread;
 Claw not your face, nor touch your head
 With your bare hand, sitting at table.” *Spelling modernised.*)

95-98. Translate—And certainly she was of great good humour, of a very pleasing and amiable carriage, and took pains to imitate courtly behaviour, and to be correct in her manners, and held as deserving of the utmost respect.

100. *conscience*. Sensitiveness; feelings generally.

107. *If men smot*. The verb is sing., *men* = Fr. *on*, one. See Grammatical Note on Indefinite Pronouns. “They smite(n)” is the plur. (past tense). “It,” line above, agrees with “any,” which is sing. Cp. *Comus*, l. 78, for “any” as a sing. pron.

110. Her nose straight (*not* long), and her eyes gray. *Trectys* is from Lat. *trahere*, to draw. Similarly *fetys*, or *fetis*, five lines below, is from Lat. *facere*, to make. The O.Fr. forms were *traitis* and *faitis*, straight and shapely respectively. The simile “gray as glas” occurs in Shakespeare—

“Her eyes are gray as glass, and so are mine.”

—*Two Gentlemen*, IV. iv. 197.

114. Supply—*get not out of proportion to her height* (for she was by no means under the middle size).

117. A rosary with green gawdies. The rosary commonly numbered fifty small beads for the Ave Marias, and five large ones, called gawdies, for the Paternosters. The gawdies were equally distributed among the small beads.

122. *There were* female chaplains in nunneries.

130. *to have offer*. To give up his profession (as a clergyman: he was apparently a priest) and accept some secular appointment. His views were not worldly.

131. *For*, here=because.

him was lever—to him it was dearer—i.e., he much preferred.

135, 136. Notice Chaucer's humour in the play on the word "philosophre." The Clerk was a philosopher, a lover of study, but he was by no means rich; he had not found "the philosopher's stone."

143, 144. Translate—Correctly, modestly, in few words, and rapidly, and was always worth listening to.

147. *a fair for the maistrie*. Fr. idiom—*bon pour la maistrie*, literally "good for (i.e., as regard) the mastery," and meaning either "a likely one to have precedence," or more probably "an excellent specimen of an abbot."

148. Chaucer's Prior sat for Scott's portrait of Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx Abbey (vide *Ivanhoe*, chapp. ii. and iv.)

154. Translate—Where he was abbot. Cell, like cloister, by synecdoche for monastery:—

"On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloister gray."

—Lady of the Lake.

155 158. Translate—He neglected as old and antiquated the Rule of St. Benedict, which was too strict for his taste, and followed the new fashion. St. Benet, or St. Benedict, died about 542; St. Mann was one of his disciples. Their Rule of monastic life was the oldest in the Church: its strictness and severity may be inferred from the frugality, labour, study, and retirement which it enjoined. It was brought to England by St. Augustine (Austin), the first of a long list of Benedictine Archbishops of Canterbury.

159. Translate—He did not care a moulted hen for the saying. The "text" referred to is not a Biblical statement: Nimrod, of course, is meant, but it is the legendary description of him as "a man of sin," which may be found in *Carbor Mundi* (circa 1420), to which allusion is made. The other "text" at l. 161, is *Carbor Mundi*: "a literal translation from the *Decretal* of Gratian: *Sicut piscis sine aqua caret vita, ita sine monasterio monachus.*"

161. *recheles*. Regarded of his monastic duties. The interpretation is given two lines below in the parenthesis. One authority (the Harleian MS.) gives *cloisterless*.

165. Chaucer led the Augustin on to his clerical reasoning, by pretending (with good-humoured irony) to agree with him.

184. *a forneys of a leed*. The fire under a boiler, or cauldron. The charred furnaces of Kent, for the smelting of iron, must have been well known to Chaucer, who was at one time a knight of the shire.

191. *a limitour*. A mendicant friar, entitled to beg within the limits of a district specially assigned to him—"his contree" (l. 198).

192. *the ordres fourc*, Dominicans (or Black Friars), Franciscans (or Grey Friars), Carmelites (or White Friars), and Augustinians (or Austin Friars).

202. *licentiat*. Held a licence from the Pope to absolve in cases where the parish priest ("curat") was debarred from acting. He had thus the power of absolution which belonged to a bishop.

209. The first *hu* means the shriven man, the second the friar.

211. *hard is of his herte*. That is, non-emotional by nature.

214. *Men moot*. One should; the verb is sing., *mun*—one. See l. 107, *supra*. *silver*—money (still called *siller* in Scotland); Fr. *argent*.

226. (*as by his fauente*). Considering the powers with which he was invested. He had more authority than the local clergy.

236. *his "In principio"*. His citation of Scriptural texts, such as the first sentence in John's Gospel ("In the beginning," &c.)—a favourite text with begging friars. (See the Tale of the Summoner, as illustrative of the rapacity of the begging friar.)

238. What he got by begging (*His purchas*) was greater than his income (*rente*).

240. *lone dauns*. Days set apart for the settling of petty quarrels among neighbours by friendly arbitration. The friar was of great help on those occasions.

245. This garment, a kind of short cloak, was of semi-circular form when laid flat, but assumed the round shape of a bell when the friar put it on. *Out of the presse*=out of the fold.

258. *for any thing*. At all costs.

259. Harwich, at one time known as the port of Orwell, in Essex, is just opposite Middelburg, in the island of Walcheren, in Holland. Commerce on the North Sea was much hampered by pirates and privateers.

260. To "selle sheeldes in eschaunge" was to change money at a profit. "Sheeldes" (*écus*) were crowns, so named from the device on the coin: Lat. *scutum*=a shield; Fr. *écuyer*, a shield-bearer, a squire.

263, 264. So cautiously did he manage his business in bargaining and borrowing.

267. *of bispe Bath*. From the neighbourhood of Bath, in the West of England—a district long noted for clothmaking.

268. *Somdel deaf*. She herself told the company the cause of her deafness: her fifth husband, she said—

"Smoot me ones on the list
For that I rente out of his book a leef,
That of the strook myn ere wex al deaf."

270. *Ypres*, in West, *Gaunt* (Ghent) in East Flanders, both famous marts for cloth in the middle ages. Edward III. encouraged the cloth industry in England by introducing weavers, dyers, &c., from Ghent.

272. That dared to take precedence of her when the women of the congregation went up to the altar with their offerings of bread and wine, &c. The modern method is to give money to collectors. The hostess of the Tabard was just such another wife, if the Host is to be believed :—

“And if that any neighebor of myne
Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne,
Or be so hardy to her to trespace,
Whan she comth hoom she rampeth in my face.”

—The Monk's Prol.

276. The weight of her head-gear, ten pounds, is probably no great exaggeration. Skelton, writing a century later, does, however, seem to exaggerate :—

“With clothes upon her head
That weigh a sow of lead.”

—Vide *Elinor Rummung*, ll. 64-72.

Gold and other heavy ornaments increased the weight of those cumbersome “keverchefs.”

282. *at chirche dore*. For marriage.

285. At Boulogne, in France, was a famous image of the Virgin Mary. But probably Bologna is meant, a city of N. Italy older than even Rome, and rich in churches and relics.

286. The shrine of St Jago, or St James of Compostella, in the province of Galicia, Spain, was another favourite resort of pilgrims. At Cologne, on the Rhine, are preserved the bones of the Three Kings—said to be the Three Wise Men of the East—Gaspar, Melchio; and Balthazar!

295. *by weste*, or westward (*sc.*, from London). Devonshire is meant.

297. The skipper was, like most sailors, a poor horseman; but he managed to keep the saddle. Cf. with *rouney* (a hack) the name of Don Quixote's charger, Rozinante.

303-305. He had helped himself to many a draught of claret on the voyage from Bordeaux, and the supercargo never a whit the wiser: he did not trouble himself with petty scruples of conscience.

306, 307. If he won in an encounter with pirates or privateers, he did not trouble himself with prisoners—he tossed them over the side, to sink or swim.

309. *him hisydes*. Always attendant on a seafaring life. It may, however, mean, peculiar to a given locality.

313. A picturesque touch.

316. *Bretayne*. Brittany, or Armorica. *Gootlund*, in the line above, probably stands for Southern Sweden.

317. There is, curiously enough, record of a vessel belonging to Dartmouth, and bearing the name of Maudelayne (Magdalen : the date of the record is 1386. This is very probably no mere coincidence. Chaucer's realism is unquestionable.

319. *atte parrys*. At the door of St Paul's, where lawyers used to meet for consultation. A parrys is a church-porch.

327-329. He was a great conveyancer, none greater : entails presented no difficulty—he could convey them as easily as property held in fee simple, and none could question the validity of his conveyancing. Some editors take *purchasing* to mean prosecution.

332, 333. He was well up in case law : knew all the cases, and decisions thereon, from the time of the Conqueror.

334. *make a thing*=draw a deed.

338. *with barres smale*. These metal “bars” on the belt were (some of them at least) perforated for the tongue of the buckle, but most of them were ornamental.

346. Believing that your fill of pleasure was indeed perfect happiness. Epicurus (a Greek philosopher of the third century B.C.) taught that pleasure was the highest good.

349. St Julian, the patron saint of travellers, providing them with the comforts of food and shelter, well-appointed inns, and hospitable homes. The Franklin was the most hospitable of men.

350. *after oon*. On the same constant scale of excellence and abundance.

354. *It snowed in his hous of mete and drinke*. This is a good motto-line for Chaucer's portrait of the hearty Franklin. Similar mottoes may be found at ll. 30, 50, 108, 146, 313, and elsewhere. *Snowed*, though it really means “abounded or swarmed,” is commonly rendered “snowed”—a much-admired metaphor. It may be noted that the House of Fame was

“ful eek of windowes
As flakes falle in grete snowes.”

—Bk. iii., ll. 101, 102.

362. *table dormant*. A fixed table, a single piece of furniture, never removed from its place in the hall. A common table was a board laid over trestles during meal-time, and then placed against the wall till wanted for the next meal.

369. A *vivasour* was a country gentleman, a sub-vassal, next to a baron in rank.

371. The parson, or parish priest. Cf. the village preacher in *The Deserted Village*. John Wyclif, rector of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, is thought to have sat for this lifelike portrait.

379. *to cursen for his tythes*. To excommunicate (or debar from the various services of the Church) those who were behind with their tithes—i.e., failed to pay him the tithes that were due.

382. *offring and . . . substaunce*. Contributions and stipend.

391. *tho wordes*—in Matthew's Gospel, v. 19.

396. *if a preest take keep*. Either—if he pay heed to it, or—if he undertake the charge of a congregation.

400. He did not leave his parish duties to a curate while he went off to London to obtain the sinecure of some chantry at St Paul's. A "chaunterye for soules" was an endowment made by some rich person for the purpose of having masses sung at specified intervals for the repose of his soul.

404. *with a bretherheed to ben withholde*. Here *with* is repeated as a prefix. The meaning seems to be—maintained in some monastery (lit., kept along with a brotherhood).

406. *the wolf, &c.* See Milton's *Lycidas*, l. 128.

418. He was no Pharisee, expectant of "greetings in the markets and to be called of men Rabbi" (Matt. xxiii. 7).

419. *a spyceed conscience*. Over-scrupulous, morbidly exacting, hypocritical, fanatical, bigoted. The meaning of the whole line is clear enough—he was broad-minded and practical.

421. Example is better than precept, though precept is good. So Goldsmith's parson "allured to brighter worlds *and led the way*."

425. A strange reason; but, as Dr Wright remarks, "a great portion of the medical science of the middle ages depended upon astrological observances."

427. *of hoot or cold, or moiste or drye* (sc., humour). The four humours corresponded to the four elements of nature—fire, air, water, earth. According to the mixture (*krasis* is Galen's word) of these humours in the body of a man his temperament was supposed to be determined. Thus there were men, like the Franklin (*vide* l. 342), of a sanguine disposition (or "complexioun"); others, like the Reeve (*vide* l. 452), were choleric; some were phlegmatic; others melancholic. Abnormal mixture of these humours was believed to produce disease.

434. The physician sent custom to the apothecary, and had a commission on the sales. The practice is not yet obsolete: the possibility of its abuse is obvious. Dickens has exposed its abuse in recent times.

436-441. The list includes the names of the principal medical authorities whose books were studied in the middle ages. Most of them were Arab astrologers and physicians (see Scott's *The Talisman*). One of them, John Gatisden, was an Oxford physician of Chaucer's own time; Barnardus, professor of medicine at Montpellier, was also, it is believed, a contemporary of Chaucer. Esculapius, Hippocrates, and Galen belonged to much remoter times; the first (mentioned in Homer) is more or less mythical, the second flourished in the fifth century B.C., the third in the second century A.D.

445. As a man of (so-called) science, he was sceptical of the truth of revelation. And yet Harry Bailly thought he looked "like a prelate." He was virtuous, but not religious. (Read his Tale.)

448. *but esy of dispence*. Pretty economical, almost narrow. The Friar was an "esy man to yeve penance"—i.e., very moderately severe.

449. *in pestilence*. A pestilence ravaged the country almost every decade in the insanitary medieval times—e.g., in 1349, in 1361, 1369, &c. Instead of preaching the cheap gospel of fresh air, pure water, and healthy surroundings generally, the medical practitioner, of those times at any rate, set up horoscopes, and made images, and hocussed their patients with other expensive jugglery; meanwhile the plague spread, and the doctors filled their pockets—and the graveyard.

450, 451. These lines are Chaucer's gentle satire on the representative physician of the fourteenth century. A solution of gold (*aureum potable*) was used as a remedy, a sovereign remedy, in certain cases; but the physician's real love for gold was not at all professional—it was quite vulgar, in fact.

458. He could look well after both granary and corn-chest.

459. No auditor of accounts could be sharper than he was in looking after the estate.

467. *bring him in arrerage* (i.e., with his accounts and reckonings). He was a careful, systematic, up-to-date bookkeeper.

469. *sleighte and . . . covyne*. Cunning and collusion.

470. *the death*. Death itself; but perhaps the Black Death, as the recurring plague was then called.

473. Because he accredited the bad or indifferent bargains to his employer, and appropriated the others—a common practice of rogue factors. Every factor thrives.

488. The office of manciple or steward is still in use. A chief part of his duty was to buy provisions for the community or fraternity—college, hospital, inn of court—which appointed him. This manciple purveyed for one of the Temples or Inns—societies of lawyers in London.

493. The Manciple was as dishonest as the Reeve or the Miller. He was, however, too cautious and clever to be caught ; he was never overtaken in a fault, and was always, when suspected or pounced upon, ready with a plausible explanation.

502, 503. *by his propre good In honour dettecees.* On his own property in a way worthy of his station, without incurring debt.

504. *as scarsly.* Antithetic to *In honour* in the preceding line, meaning economically.

505. The first word joins *able to worthy* five lines above.

507. *sette hir aller cappe.* Set the cap of (tricked) all of them.

508. The Miller was a sufficiently stout fellow. *For the noncs=* for the(n) once (for the occasion).

510. *That proved wel.* Of which good proof was given. *Proved* is used intransitively.

511. *the ram.* The common prize for the best wrestler.

512. *a thikke knarre.* A thickset, muscular fellow.

525. *tollen thryes.* Take thrice his due.

526. And yet he had no need to be dishonest, for he was a skilful miller, sure of good custom. With his thumb the miller feels the quality of the meal from time to time, and if he has a good thumb it is worth gold to him : he regulates the grinding agreeably to the report of his thumb, and, by producing an excellent quality of meal, he secures good customers.

527. White and blue are still the meal-miller's colours, being least likely to show up meal-dust.

530. *Summour.* Apparitor ; in Scotland, the kirk-treasurer's man (see Allan Ramsay's *Elegy on John Cooper*).

531. Cherubs were usually painted red.

532. *with yen narwe.* Either with eyes close set, or, more probably, with small eyes. It may mean with half-shut eyes.

551. If he were examined beyond that.

553. "The question is, What is the law on this case?"

561. *Of Rouncevale.* The hospital of St Mary of Rounceyvalle, in London, affiliated to the Priory of Roncevaux, in Navarre.

583. From Berwick-on-Tweed to Ware in Hertfordshire ; from north to south of England.

TALK AND INCIDENT BY THE WAY.

THE route taken by the Pilgrims was eastward, and a little south, from London to Canterbury, a distance of about fifty-six miles. It would seem that the journey occupied four days. On the morning of the 17th of April, some year towards the end of the fourteenth century, they set forth from the Tabard Inn in Southwark, even then a part of London, on the Surrey side of the Thames, and, after passing Deptford and Greenwich, came to a halt for the night at some place about fifteen miles or so from the starting-point. During this stage of the journey they had the Knight's tale, the Miller's, the Reeve's, and the Cook's.

On the morning of the second day the Man of Law was the first to speak; then came the Shipman, the Prioress, the Poet, the Monk, and one of the Priests. The company were near Rochester while the Monk was speaking, and probably they stopped there for the night. They were now about thirty miles on their way.

The Doctor may have opened the third day's proceedings; and was followed by the Pardoner, the Wife of Bath, the Friar, the Summoner, the Clerk, and the Merchant. They were near Sittingbourne, ten or eleven miles from Rochester, as the Summoner ended his tale, and their halting-place for the night may have been a few miles beyond Sittingbourne.

The Squire led off, on the morning of the fourth day, with his story of "Cambuscan bold," and then came the turn of the Franklin, the Nun, the Canon's Yeoman (who joined them at Boughton-under-Blee), the Manciple (who finished his tale at four o'clock), and the Parson. By nightfall they reached the Cathedral city, and probably put up at the Chequers Inn.

Between the tales are connecting-passages (or links, as they

have been called), sometimes enlivened with comic incident, in which the Host of the Tabard figures prominently, and always interesting for the dramatic dialogue among the characters. The Friar and the Summoner quarrel; so do the Miller and the Reeve. The Cook gets drunk; one of the party flees "for very sorrow and shame"; the Parson lectures the Innkeeper for swearing; the Sailor will have no preaching from the Parson; and both the Pardoner and the Wife of Bath amuse the Pilgrims, he by his garrulous vanity and impudence, and she by her varied revelations of the married state.

I. *The Parson reproves the Host for sinful swearing.*

Our hoste upon his stiropes stood anon,
 And seyde—"Good men, herkneth everichon;
 This was a thrifty tale for the nones.—
 Sir Parish Prest," quod he, "for Goddes bones,
 Tel us a tale, as was thy forward yore:
 I se wel that ye lerned men in lore
 Can moche good, by Goddes dignitee!"

The persone him answerde—"Bencite!
 What eyleth the man so sinfully to swere?"

Our hoste answerde—"O Jankyn, be ye there? 10
 I smelle a Loller in the wind," quod he.

"Ho! good men," quod our hoste, "herkneth me;
 Abydeth, for Goddes digne passioun,
 For we shal han a predicacioun,—
 This Loller heer wil prechen us somewhat."

"Nay, by my fader soul! that shal he nat,"
 Seyde the Shipman; "heer shal he nat preche,

He shal no gospel glosen heer, ne teche.
 We leve alle in the grete God," quod he.
 "He wolde sowen som difficultee, 20
 Or springen cokkel in our clene corn;
 And therfor, hoste, I warne thee biforn,
 My joly body shal a tale telle,
 And I shal clinken yow so mery a belle
 That I shal waken al this companye;
 But it shal nat ben of philosophye,
 Ne of phisyk, ne termes queinte of lawe—
 Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe."

II. *The Host's comment upon the Poet's tale: he calls upon
 the Abbot to entertain the company.*

Whan ended was my tale of Melibee
 And of Prudence and hir benignitee, 30
 Our hoste seyde—"As I am faithful man,
 And by the precious corpus Madrian,
 I hadde lever than a barel ale
 That goode lief my wyf hadde herd this tale;
 For she nis nothing of swich pacience
 As was this Melibeus wyf, Prudence.
 By corpus bones! whan I bete my knaves,
 She bringth me forth the grete clobbed staves,
 And cryeth—"Slee the dogges everichoon,
 And brek hem, bothe bak and every boon!" 40
 And if that any neighebor of myne
 Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne,
 Or be so hardy to hir to trepace,
 Whan she comth hoom she rampeth in my face,
 And cryeth—"False coward, wreke thy wyf!
 By corpus bones! I wol have thy knyf

And thou shalt have my distaf and go spinne !
Fro day to night right thus she wol biginne—
‘Allas !’ she seith, ‘that ever I was shape
To wedde a milksop or a coward ape 50
That wol be overlad with every wight !
Thou darst nat stonden by thy wyves right !’
This is my lyf, but if that I wol fighte ;
And out at dore anon I mot me dighte,
Or elles I am but lost but if that I
Be lik a wilde leoun foolhardy.
I wot wel she wol do me slee som day
Som neighebor, and thanne go my wey ;—
For I am perilous with knyf in honde,
Al be it that I dar nat hir withstonde, 60
For she is big in armes, by my feith !
That shal he finde that hir misdooth or seith.
But lat us passe away fro this matere.
My lord the monk,” quod he, “be mery of chere,
For ye shal telle a tale trewely.
Lo, Rouchestre stant heer faste by !
Ryd forth, myn owen lord, brek nat our game ;
But, by my trewthe, I knowe nat your name.
Wher shal I calle yow my lord dan John,
Or dan Thomas, or elles dan Albon ? 70
Of what hous be ye, by your fader kin ?
I vow to God thou hast a ful fair skin.
It is a gentil pasture ther thou gost ;
Thou art nat lik a penaunt or a gost.
Upon my feith, thou art som officer,
Som worthy sexteyn, or som celerer ;
For, by my fader soule, as to my doom,
Thou art a maister whan thou art at hoom,
No povre cloisterer, ne no novys,
But a governour, wyly and wys ; 80

And therewithal of brawnes and of bones
A welfaring persone for the nones." . . .

This worthy monk took al in pacience,
And seyde—"I wol doon al my diligence,
As fer as souneth into honestee,
To telle yow a tale, or two or three.
And, if yow list to herkne hiderward,
I wol ye seyn the lyf of seint Edward ;
Or elles first tragedies wol I telle,
Of whiche I have an hundred in my celle. 90
Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie,
As olde bokes maken us memorie,
Of him that stood in greet prosperitee
And is yfallen out of heigh degree
Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly.
And they ben versified comunly
Of six feet, which men clepe exametron.
In prose eek ben endyted many oon,
And eek in metre in many sundry wyse,
Lo, this declaring oughte ynough suffise." 100

III. *The Knight interrupts the Abbot ; and the Host calls
upon one of the Priests for a merry tale.*

"Ho !" quod the knight, "good sir, namore of this !
That ye han seyde is right ynough, y-wis,
And mochel more ; for litel hevynesse
Is right ynough to mochel folk, I gesse.
I seye for me, it is a greet disese,
Wheras men han ben in greet welthe and ese,

To heren of hir sodeyn fal, alas !
 And the contrarie is joye and greet solas,—
 As whan a man hath been in povre estaat
 And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat, 110
 And ther abydeþ in prosperitee :
 Swich thing is gladson, as it thinketh me ;
 And of swich thing were goodly for to telle.”

“Ye,” quod our hoste, “by Seint Poules belle,
 Ye seye right sooth ! This monk, he clappeth loude ;
 He spak how Fortune ‘*covered with a cloude*’
 I noot never what ; and als of a ‘*tragedie*’
 Right now ye herde ; and, parde ! ‘*no remedie*
It is for to biwaille ne compleyne
That that is doon’ ; and als it is a peyne, 120
 As ye han seyð, to here of hevinesse.
 Sir Monk, namore of this, so God yow blesse !
 Your tale anoyeth al this compagne ;
 Swich talking is nat worth a boterflye ;
 For therin is ther no disport ne game.
 Wherfor, Sir Monk, or Dan Piers by your name,
 I preye yow hertely telle us somewhat elles ;
 For sikerly, nere clinking of your belles
 That on your brydel hange on every syde,
 By heven king that for us alle dyde ! 130
 I sholde er this han fallen down for slepe,
 Although the slough had never been so depe.
 Than had your tale al be told in vayn ;
 For certainly, as that thise clerkes seyn,
 ‘Wheras a man may have noon audience
 Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence.’
 And wel I woot the substance is in me
 If any thing shall wel reported be.
 Sir, sey somewhat of hunting, I yow preye.”

"Nay," quod this monk, "I have no lust to pleye.
Now let another telle, as I have told." 141

Than spak our host, with rude speche and bold.
And seyde unto the Nonnes Preest anon—
"Com neer, thou preest ! com hider, thou Sir John !
Tel us swich thing as may our hertes glade ;
Be blythe, though thou ryde upon a jade.
What though thyn hors be bothe foule and lene ?
If he wol serve thee, rek nat a bene ;
Look that thyn herte be mery evermo."

"Yis, sir !" quod he, "yis, host ! So mote I go, 150
But I be mery, y-wis I wol be blamed."
And right anon his tale he hath attamed,
And thus he seyde unto us everichon,
This swete preest, this goodly man, Sir John.

IV. *The Host's comment on the tale of Virginia, told by the Physician: The Pardoner is called upon for a comic story, and becomes garrulous.*

"Now trewely, min owne maister dere,
This is a pitous tale for to here.
But, natheles, passe over ; it is no fors.
I prey to God to save thy gentil cors. . . .
So mot I theen, thou art a propre man,
And lik a prelat, by Seint Ronyan ! 160
Seyde I nat wel ? I cannat speke in terme ;
But wel I wot thou dost my herte to erme
That I almost have caughte a cardiale.
By corpus bones ! but I have triacle,

Or elles a draught of moyste and corny ale,
 Or but I here anon a mery tale,
 Myn herte is lost for pitee of this mayde.
 Thou bel amy, thou pardoner," he seyde,
 "Tel us som mirthe or japes right anon."

"It shall be doon," quod he, "by Seint Ronyon! 170
 But first," quod he, "heer at this alestake
 I wol both drinke, and eten of a cake."

But right anon thise gentils gonne to crye—
 "Nay, lat him telle us of no ribaudrye;
 Tel us som moral thing that we may lere
 Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly here."

"I graunte, ywis," quod he; "but I mot thinke
 Upon som honest thing whil that I drinke.—

Lordinges," quod he, "in chirches whan I preche,
 I payne me to han an hauteyn speche, 180
 And ringe it out as round as goth a belle,
 For I can al by rote that I telle.
 My theme is alwey oon, and ever was—
 '*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*'

First I pronounce whennes that I come,
 And than my bulles shewe I alle and somme;
 Our lige lordes seel on my patente—
 That shewe I first, my body to warente,
 That no man be so bold, ne preest ne clerk,
 Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk. 190
 And after that, than telle I forth my tales,
 Bulles of popes, and of cardinales,
 Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe;
 And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe

To saffron with my predicacioun,
 And for to stire hem to devocioun.
 Than shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
 Ycrammed ful of cloutes and of bones;
 Reliks been they, as wenen they echoon.
 Than have I in latoun a shoulder boon 200
 Which that was of an holy Jewes shepe.
 'Good men,' seye I, 'tak of my wordes kepe:
 If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
 If cow or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle
 That any worm hath ete or worm ystonge,
 Tak water of that welle, and wash his tonge
 And it is hool anon. And farthermore,
 Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every sore,
 Shal every sheep be hool that of this welle
 Drinketh a draughte. Tak kepe eek what I telle:
 If that the goodman that the bestes oweth 211
 Wol every wike, er that the cok him croweth,
 Fasting, drinken of this welle a draughte,
 As thilke holy Jewe our eldres taughte,
 His bestes and his stoor shal multiplie.' . . .

By this gaude have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
 An hundred mark sith I was pardoner.
 I stande lik a clerk in my pulpet,
 And whan the lewed peple is doun yset,
 I preche so as ye han herd bifore, 220
 And telle an hundred false japes more.
 Than payne I me to strecche forth the nekke,
 And est and west upon the peple I bekke,
 As doth a douve sitting on a berne.
 Myn hondes and my tonge goon so yerne
 That it is joye to see my bisnesse.
 Of avarice and of swich cursednesse

Is al my preching for to make hem free
To yeve her pens, and namely unto me.
For my entente is nat but for to winne, 230
And nothing for correccioun of sinne.
I rekke never, whan that they ben beryed,
Though that her soules gon ablakeberied ! . . .

But shortly myn entente I wol devyse :
I preche nothing but for coveityse ;
Therfor my theme is yet, and ever was,
'*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*'
Thus can I preche agayn the same vice
Which that I use—and that is Avarice.
But, though myself be gilty in that sinne, 240
Yet can I maken other folk to twinne
From avarice, and sore to repente.
But that is not my principal entente :
I preche nothing but for coveityse.
Of this matere it oughte ynough suffyse.

Than telle I hem ensamples many oon
Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon ;
For lewed peple loven tales olde,—
Swich thinges can they wel reporte and holde.
What ! trowe ye, whyles that I may preche, 250
And winne gold and silver for I teche,
That I wol live in povert wilfully ?
Nay, nay, I thoughte it never trewely !
For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes ;
I wol not do no labour with my hondes,
Ne make basketes, and live therby,
Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.
I wol noon of the apostles counterfete ;
I wol have money, wolles, chese, and whete,

Al were it yeven of the prestes page, 260
 Or of the povrest widwe in a village,
 Al sholde hir children sterve for famine.
 Nay, I wol drinke licour of the vyne. . . .

[*After refreshment—*

Now have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,
 I hope I shal yow telle a moral tale ;
 For, though myself be a ful vicious man,
 A moral tale yet I yow telle can,
 Which I am wont to preche, for to winne.
 Now holde your pees—my tale I wol beginne.”

V. *The Pilgrims are joined by two Strangers, one of whom exposes the other, and drives him from the company.*

Whan ended was the lyf of Seint Cecile, 270
 Er we had riden fully fyve mile,
 At Boughton under Blee us gan atake
 A man that clothed was in clothes blake,
 And undernethe he wered a surpys.
 His hakeney, that was al pomely grys,
 So swatte that it wonder was to see ;
 It semed he had priked myles three.
 (The hors eek that his yeman rood upon
 So swatte that unnethe mighte it gon.)
 Aboute the peytrel stood the foom ful hye,— 280
 He was of fome al flekked as a pye.
 A male tweyfold on his croper lay ;
 It semed that he caried lyte array ;
 Al lyght for somer rood this worthy man ;
 And in myn herte wondren I bigan
 What that he was, til that I understood
 How that his cloke was sowed to his hood,—

For which, whan I had longe avysed me,
 I demed him som chanon for to be.
 His hat heng at his bak down by a laas, 290
 For he had riden more than trot or paas ;
 He had ay priked lyk as he were wood.
 A clote leef he hadde under his hood
 For swoot, and for to kepe his heed from hete.
 But it was joye for to seen him swete !
 His forheed dropped as a stillatorie
 Were ful of plantain and of paritorie.
 And, whan that he was come, he gan to crye,—
 “ God save,” quod he, “ this joly compainye !
 Faste have I priked,” quod he, “ for your sake, 300
 Bycause that I wolde yow atake
 To ryden in this mery compainye.”

His yeman eek was ful of curteisye,
 And seyde—“ Sirs, now in the morwe tyde
 Out of your hostelrye I saugh you ryde,
 And warned heer my lord and my soverayn,
 Which that to ryden with yow is ful fayn
 For his disport ; he loveth daliaunce.”

“ Frend, for thy warning God yeve thee good chaunce,”
 Than seyde our host ; “ for, certes, it wolde seme 310
 Thy lord were wys, and so I may wel deme.
 He is ful jocund also, dar I leye.
 Can he oght telle a mery tale or tweye
 With which he glade may this compainye ? ”

“ Who, sir ? My lord ? Ye, ye, withouten lye,
 He can of murthe, and eek of jolitee
 Nat but ynough. Also, sir, trusteth me,

And ye him knewe as wel as do I,
 Ye wolde wondre how wel and thriftily
 He coude werke, and that in sondry wyse. 320
 He hath take on him many a greet empyrse
 Which were ful hard for any that is here
 To bringe aboute, but they of him it lere.
 As homly as he rit amonges yow,
 If ye him knewe, it wolde be for your prow.
 Ye wolde nat forgon his acqueyntaunce
 For mochel good, I dar leye in balaunce
 Al that I have in my possessioun.
 He is a man of heigh discrecioun,
 I warne you wel; he is a passing man." 330

"Wel," quod our host, "I pray thee, tel me than,
 Is he a clerk, or noon? Tel what he is."

"Nay, he is gretter than a clerk ywis,"
 Seyde this yeman; "and, in wordes fewe,
 Host, of his craft somewhat I wol yow shewe.
 I seye my lord can swich subtilitee
 (But al his craft ye may nat wite at me,—
 And somewhat helpe I yet to his werking)
 That al this ground on which we ben ryding,
 Til that we come to Caunterbury toun, 340
 He coude al clene turne it upsodoun,
 And pave it al of silver and of gold."

And whan this yeman hadde this ytold
 Unto our host, he seyde—"Bencite!
 This thing is wonder merveillous to me—
 Sin that thy lord is of so heigh prudence,
 Bycause of which men sholde him reverence,

That of his worship rekketh he so lyte.
 His oversloppe nis nat worth a myte,
 As in effect, to him, so mote I go ! 350
 It is al baudy, and totore also.
 Why is thy lord so sluttish, I thee preye,
 And is of power better cloth to beye,
 If that his dede accorde with thy speche ?
 Telle me that, and that I thee biseche."

"Why?" quod this yeman, "wherto axe ye me ?
 God help me so ! for he shal never thee.
 (But I wol nat avowe that I seye,
 And therfor kepe it secree, I yow preye.)
 He is to wys, in feith, as I bileve. 360
 That that is overdoon—it wol nat preve
 Aright, as clerkes seyn ; it is a vyce.
 Wherefore in that I holde him lewed and nyce.
 For, whan a man hath overgreet a wit,
 Ful oft him happeth to misusen it.
 So doth my lord ; and that me greveth sore.
 God it amende ! I can sey yow namore."

"Therof no fors, good yeman," quod our host ;
 "Sin of the conning of thy lord thou wost,
 Tel how he doth, I pray thee hertely, 370
 Sin that he is so crafty and so sly.
 Wher dwellen ye, if it to telle be?"

"In the suburbes of a toun," quod he ;
 "Lurkinge in hernes and in lanes blinde,
 Wheras thise robbours and thise theves by kinde
 Holden hir privree fereful residence,
 As they that dar not shewen hir presence :
 So faren we, if I shal seye the sothe."

“Now,” quod our host, “yit lat me talke to thee ;
Why artow so discoloured on thy face ?” 380

“Peter !” quod he, “God yive it harde grace !
I am so used in the fyr to blowe
That it hath chaunged my colour, I trowe.
I am nat wont in no mirour to pryē,
But swinke sore, and lerne multiplie.
We blondren ever, and pouren in the fyr,
And for al that we faile of our desyr.
For ever we lakken our conclusioun.
To mochel folk we doon illusioun,
And borwe gold, be it a pound or two, 390
Or ten, or twelve, or many sommes mo,
And make hem wenen atte leste weye
That of a pound we coude make tweye.
Yet is it fals. And ay we han good hope
It for to doon, and after it we grope
But that science is so fer us biforn
We mowen nat—although we hadde it sworn—
It overtake, it slyt away so faste :
It wol us maken beggers atte laste.”

Whyl this yeman was thus in his talking, 400
This chanoun drough him ner, and herde al thing
Which that this yeman spak. Suspecioun
Of mennes speche ever hadde this chanoun.
For Catoun seith that he that gilty is
Demeth al thing be spoke of him, ywis.
Bycause of that he gan so ny him drawe
His yemen that he herde al his sawe ;
And thus he seyde unto his yemen tho—
“Hold thou thy pees, and spek no wordes mo ;
For if thou do, thou shalt it dere abyē. 410

Thou sclaudrest me, heer in this companye ;
And eek discoverest that thou sholdest hyde."

"Ye?" quod our host ; "tel on, whatso bityde ;
Of al his threting rekke nat a myte !"

"In faith," quod he, "namore I do but lyte."

And whan this chanoun sey it wolde nat be,
But his yeman wolde telle his privetee,
He fledde away for verray sorwe and shame.

"A !" quod the yeman, "heer shall aryse game.
Al that I can, anon now wol I telle. 420
Sin he is gon, the foule Fend him quelle !
For never herafter wol I with him mete
For peny ne for pound, I yow bihete.
He that me broughte first unto that game—
Er that he deye, sorwe have he, and shame !
For it is ernest to me, by my feith !
That fele I wel, whatso eny man seith.
And yet, for al my smerte and al my grief,
For al my sorwe and labour and meschief,
I coude never leve it in no wyse. 430

Now wolde God my wit mighte suffyse
To tellen al that longeth to that art !
And natheles yet wol I tellen part ;
Sin that my lord is gon, I wol nat spare ;
Swich thing as that I knowe, I wol declare."

VI. *The Cook, being drunk, falls from his horse : he is first rated, and then recovered by the Manciple to the amusement of the company.*

Wite ye nat wher ther stant a litel toun
 Which that yelepied is Bob-up-and-down,
 Under the Blee, in Caunterbury weye?
 Ther gan our hoste for to jape and pleye,
 And seyde—"Sirs, what! Dun is in the myre! 440
 Is ther no man, for preyer ne for hyre,
 That wol awake our felawe heer bihinde?
 A theef mighte him ful lightly robbe and binde.
 See how he nappeth! see, for cokkes bones,
 That he wol falle from his hors at ones!
 Is that a cook of Londoun, with meschaunce?
 Do him come forth—he knoweth his penaunce;
 For he shal telle a tale, by my fey,
 Although it be nat worth a botel hey.
 Awake, thou cook! sit up! God yive thee sorwe!
 What eyleth thee to slepen by the morwe? 451
 Hastow had fleen al night? or artow dronke?
 Or hastow al the longe night yswonke
 So that thou mayst nat holden up thyn heed?"

This cook, that was ful pale and nothing reed,
 Seyd to our host—"So God my soule blesse,
 As ther is falle on me swich hevinesse,
 Not I nought why, that me were lever slepe
 Than the beste galoun wyn that is in Chepe."

"Wel," quod the maunciple, "if it may doon ese
 To thee, Sir Cook, and to no wight displese 461

Which that heer rydeth in this companye,
 And that our host wol of his curteisye,
 I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale.
 For, in good feith, thy visage is ful pale,
 Thyn yen dasen eek, as that me thinketh,
 And wel I wot thy breeth ful soure stinketh,
 That sheweth wel thou art nought wel disposed.
 Of me, certein, thou shalt nought ben yglosed.
 See how he ganeth, lo ! this dronken wight, 470
 As though he wolde us swalwe anonright.
 Hold clos thy mouth, man, by thy fader kin !
 Sathanas sette his cloven foot therin !
 Thy cursed breeth infecte wol us alle ;
 Fy ! stinking swyn, fy ! foule mot thee falle !
 A ! taketh heed, sirs, of this lusty man.
 Now, swete sir, wol ye justen atte fan ?
 Therto, methinketh, ye ben wel yshape !
 I trowe that ye dronken han wyn ape,
 And that is whan men pleyen with a straw." 480

And with this speche the cook wex wroth and wraw,
 And on the maunciple he gan nodde faste
 For lakke of speche, and down the hors him caste,
 Wheras he lay til that men up him took.
 This was a fair chivachee of a cook !
 Allas he nadde holde him by his ladel !
 And, er that he agayn were in his sadel,
 Ther was greet showving bothe to and fro
 To lifte him up, and muchel care and wo,
 So unweldy was this sory palled gost. 490
 And to the maunciple than spak our host—
 "Bycause drink hath dominacioun
 Upon this man, by my savacioun,
 I trowe he lewedly wolde telle his tale.

For, were it wyn, or old or moysty ale
 That he hath dronke, he speketh in his nose,
 And fneseth faste, and eek he hath the pose.
 He hath also to do more than ynough
 To kepe him and his capel out of the slough ;
 And, if he falle from his capel eftsone, 500
 Than shal we alle have ynough to done
 In lifting up his hevy drunken cors.
 Telle on thy tale ; of him make I no fors.

But yet, maunciple, in feith thou art to nyce
 Thus openly repreve him of his vyce.
 Another day he wol, peraventure,
 Reclayme thee, and bringe thee to lure :
 I mene he speke wol of smale thinges,
 As for to pinchen at thy rekeninges,
 That were not honest if it cam to preef." 510

"That," quod the maunciple, "were a greet mescheef!
 So mighte he lightly bringe me in the snare.
 Yet hadde I lever payen for the mare
 Which he rit on, than he sholde with me stryve ;
 I wol not wrathe him, al so mote I thryve !
 That that I spak I seyde it in my bourde.
 And wite ye what ? I have heer in a gourde
 A draught of wyn, ye, of a rype grape ;
 And right anon ye shul seen a good jape.
 This cook shal drinke therof, if I may ; 520
 Up peyne of deeth, he wol nat seye me nay."
 And certainly, to tellen as it was,
 Of this vessel the cook drank faste, allas !
 What neded him ? he drank ynough biforn.
 And, whan he hadde pouped in this horn,

To the maunciple he took the gourde agayn ;
 And of that drinke the cook was wonder fayn,
 And thanked him in swich wyse as he coude.

Than gan our host to laughen wonder loude,
 And seyde—"I see wel it is necessarie, 530
 Wher that we gon, good drink we with us carie ;
 For that wol turne rancour and disese
 Tacord and love, and many a wrong apese.
 O thou Bachus ! yblessed be thy name,
 That so canst turnen earnest into game ;
 Worship and thank be to thy deitee !
 Of that matere ye gete namore of me.
 Tel on thy tale, maunciple, I thee preye."

"Wel, sir," quod he, "now herkneth what I seye."

NOTES.

3. *a thrifty tale*. The lawyer's story of Constance is meant.

8. *Bencite*. For Benedicite=Bless ye (*sc.*, the Lord).

10. *Jankyn*. Lit., little John, Johnny—used with derisive familiarity. A common name for a priest, or even a Presbyterian minister, was Mass John, down even to the eighteenth century. (See Thomson's letters.)

be ye there? Is that your position? Is that the kind of person you are?

11. *a Loller*. A heretic, or follower of Wyclif; a canting, puritanical fellow. In Old Eng. a loller meant one who lolls or lounges about like a vagabond. This old word was confused with Lollard, a German nickname (and surname) signifying a mumblor of prayers. Dr Skeat notes that "by a bad pun the Latin *lollium*, tares, was connected with Lollard. . . . This obviously led to allusions to the Parable of the

Tares, and fully accounts for the punning allusion to cockle—*i.e.*, tares"—at l. 21.

19. He means, Let us be content with the common belief in God, and let no one start theological difficulties and dissensions here.

21. *springen*. Cause to spring up, sow or scatter.

24. The language is metaphorical. He would tell a livelier and more entertaining story than the lawyer had told.

29. *my tale of Melibee*. Chaucer had commenced the Rime of Sir Thopas in the romantic ballad-measure then so popular, and, after about two hundred lines of it, had been brusquely interrupted by the Host, who characterised his story as wearisome and his verse as doggerel. "No more of this!" said the Host, and called for something more entertaining or more instructive—in prose, if the poet liked. The poet chose prose, and narrated the Tale of Melibeus and his wife Prudence. It was a story of injuries sustained by Prudence and her daughter in Melibeus's absence: he is bent upon ample revenge, but his wife persuades him to let their enemies go unpunished. The Host finds in the character of Dame Prudence a complete contrast to that of his own wife, and treats the company to some interesting details of his domestic life.

32. *Corpus Madrian*. Body of St Mathurin, of which a legend tells that it would not rest in the grave till it was interred in France, as the saint had directed before his death.

34. *goode lief my wyf*. My good dear wife. Cf. "Dear my lord."

41-44. Cf. the portrait of the Wife of Bath in the Prologue. She too was "out of alle charitee" when similarly offended.

57. *do me slee*. Cause me to slay.

58. *go my wey*. Leave me alone (to take the consequence).

62. *seith* for *mis-sayeth*, contradicts.

67. *Kyd forth*, &c. Inviting the Prior to a place beside him, where he could tell his story,

69. *dan*, for *Don*, or *Dom*—*i.e.*, *Dominus* (a title of respect for monks, &c.)—Later poets, like Spenser and Thomson, affecting the antique style, have such combinations as *Dan Chaucer*, *Dan Homer*, *Dan Abraham*, &c.

74. Cf. the Monk's portrait in the Prologue: "He was nat pale as a forpynd goost."

88. Edward the Confessor, at one time regarded as the patron saint of England—an honour now given to St George.

89. This he proceeds to do.

90. *my celle*. His priory.

97. Latin hexameters are meant, such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or the *Æneid*, or the *Thebaid* of Statius.

98. *In prose.* Chaucer knew Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium* in Latin prose.

99. And also in other than hexameter verse.

101. *good sir.* "Sir Monk, or Dan Piers by your name," as the Host called the Prior. His Tale proved to be a succession of short tragic narratives which had anything but an enlivening effect upon the company. Accordingly the Knight interrupts the gloomy recital, which, besides being gloomy, threatened to be endless.

116-120. The Prior had just told the tragic story of Cræsus, winding up with the lines—

"Anhangèd was Cresús, the proudè king ;
His royal tronè might' him not availle :
Tragédi' is noon other maner thing,
Ne can in singing cryè, ne biwaille,
But for that Fortune alway wol assaille
With unwar strook the regnes that ben proude ;
For when men trusteth hir, than wol she faille,
And cover' hir brightè face as with a cloude."

The Host, as umpire, had been listening attentively enough, as his quotations or references show.

126. This is the Host's fourth guess at the Prior's name.

137. He was sole judge of the tales.

139. We are told in the Prologue of his greyhounds, his hunting horses, and his love of coursing.

144. *Sir* was the title commonly given to a priest or clergyman who had not taken the Master's degree. Cf., in Shakespeare, Sir Hugh Evans and Sir Oliver Martext. See note to l. 10.

152. *attamed.* Broached, opened, begun. Attained is another form, both from Lat. *tangere*, to touch ; cf. Fr. *entamer*, to cut into, attack.

158. He blesses the doctor for his tale.

160. *Seint Ronyan.* Probably the Scottish St Ronan, or St Ninian (pronounced, in Lowland Scotch, St Ringan).

161. *Seyde I nat wel?* "Said I well, bully Hector?" asks mine Host of the Garter Inn, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Mine Host of the Tabard may have been the prototype of the blustering Host of the Garter, with his imperious manner, his quick decided utterances, repetitions, and abrupt interrogatives. There is certainly a strong family likeness between them. Mine Host of the Tabard has perhaps more dignity, because he has less fuss, but he is equally authoritative and peremptory, and is freer with his tongue.

162. *crme*. Old Eng. *carum*, wretched. Dr Skeat identifies Shakespeare's "yearn" (to grieve) with this Old Eng. word:—

"That every like is not the same, O Cæsar,
The heart of Brutus yearns to think upon!"

—*Julius Cæsar*, II. ii.

164. The Host's oaths, which are often of his own invention, need not be explained.

but I have triacle. Unless I have some cordial, some remedy. The word (our "treacle") means an electuary or salve, such as was used to cure a wound made by some wild beast, the root being Gr. *thēr*, a wild animal; *theriakon*, balsamic remedy for the bite of a wild animal. (The English Bible of 1568, the Bishops' Bible, is sometimes called the Treacle Bible, from the use of *treacle* for *balm* in a verse in Jeremiah—"Is there no balm in Gilead?")

171. *At this alestake*. At this roadside inn we are approaching. The ale stake projected from the wall, and upbore a bunch of leaves (a "bush") of ivy or other evergreen. Hence the proverb, "Good ale needs no bush," meaning, if the ale is good the inn needs no sign to proclaim it: people soon get to know it.

184. The root of evils is covetousness. In the Authorised Version, "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. vi. 10).

187. *Our lige lordes seel*. The Pope's.

214. *thilke holy Jewe*. The Jew referred to in l. 201, from which it would appear that the Pardoner pretended that the sheep, whose shoulder-bone he exhibited, had belonged to the Patriarch Jacob. (Read Genesis xxx., last seven verses.)

223. *gon ablakeberied*. Go astray and are lost. The metaphor is from children gathering or wandering in search of blackberries. The termination *-ed* for *-ing* (passive for active) is not uncommon; for example, in the *Franklin's Tale*, Aurelius assures the "philosopher" that he will yet pay him in full though he should have "to goon abegged" in his bare kilt. (Cf. the common use of the passive affix *-able* for the active *-ive* in Shakespeare.)

270. *the lyf of Saint Cecilia*. Narrated by the nun attending on the lady Prioress.

271. Reckoning from Ospringe, well proved to have been a resting-place for pilgrims travelling from London to Canterbury.

272. Boughton is about equidistant from Ospringe on the one hand and Canterbury on the other—five miles from each. To distinguish it from other villages of the name it is called Boughton-under-Blean.

289. *chanoun*. A "registered" clergyman; Gr. *kanon*, a rule, a register.

305. At Ospringe, where they had spent the night.

309. *warning*. See third line above. To warn = to inform.

362. *as clerkes seyn*. *Omne nimium nocet*. Cf. the common saying, "Too much of a good thing."

363. *lewed and nyce*. An instance of bilingualism, meaning foolish. The romance word is from Lat. *nescius* = ignorant. *Lewed*, a native word, is cognate with "lay" as opposed to "cleric."

364, 365. "Knowledge and wisdom," says Cowper, "far from being one, have oftentimes no connection."

373. Apparently the canon was of the secular class. The regular canons lived under one roof, and observed the rule of their order, which was never so strict as that of the monks.

378, 379. The rimes in this couplet are to be noticed -*sóthè, tó thee*: from them we may infer the sound of final *r*. In the portrait of the Pardoner in the Prologue, *Rómè* rimes to *tó mè*.

381. *Peter!* = by St Peter.

385. *multiplye*. To multiply was the technical expression for making gold or silver out of baser metals, or increasing the quantity of precious metals by alchemy, or a course of chemical operations. In *The Alchemist* (Ben Jonson's best play) we have multiplying thus explained:—

"How oft I iterate the work
So many times I *add unto his virtue*;
As—if at first one ounce convert a hundred,
After his second loose he'll turn a thousand,
His third solution ten, his fourth a hundred,
After his fifth a thousand thousand ounces
Of any imperfect metal into pure
Silver or gold."

—Act II. sc. i.

404. *Catoun*. Dr Skeat points out that Chaucer here refers to the *Disticha de Moribus* of Dionysius Cato (a Latin writer of the fourth century), and quotes a line from Distich 17 of the First Book, "Consciens ipse sibi, de se putat omnia dici."

437. No thorp or village now bears this name, but a place answering to the situation, between Boughton and Canterbury, is still known as Up-and-Down Field: it is, however, off the (modern) road.

440. *Dun is in the myre!* A proverbial saying (literally, the dun horse is stuck in the mud), meaning "we are not getting on." Brand's

Popular Antiquities gives a description of the game "Dun's in the Mire." Shakespeare refers to the game in *Romeo and Juliet*, I. iv. —

"If thou art dun we'll draw thee from the mire,
Or (save your reverence) love ; wherein thou stick'st
Up to the ears."

458, 459. "(I know not why) that a sleep would be to me more welcome than the best gallon of wine in all Cheapside."

477. The fan is the shield or tilting-board of the quintain. The Manciple asks the question ironically as the drunken Cook suddenly sways forward in the saddle with the motion of one who, in tilting at the fan, would escape the blow of the revolving arm of the quintain. The quintain consisted of an upright post on the top of which was placed a rotating cross bar. One arm of the bar was the fan or vane, at which the tilter aimed as he rode past ; the other arm, to which was commonly attached a bag of sand, swung round when the fan was struck, and the tilter's business was to avoid or dodge the blow. There are still the remains of an old quintain at Offham in Kent. Orlando, in *As You Like It*, compares himself to "a quintain, a mere lifeless block" (Act I. sc. ii.)

479. *wyn ape*. The different degrees of drunkenness, or effects of drunkenness upon different temperaments, were indicated by the names of these animals—lion, ape, sheep, pig. When the Manciple described the Cook as being in the ape (or playful) stage of intoxication, he was, of course, continuing in his ironical vein.

507. The metaphor is from the sport of hawking. The line means that the Cook might some day have the whip-hand of the Manciple and use his advantage.

512. *bringe me in the snure*. Have the advantage over me.

THE TALES.

It was decided by lot that the Knight should tell the first tale. The decision was doubtless in accordance with the general feeling that the person of highest rank and character in the company should have the honour of leading off. His subject was the classical romance of the two noble Theban kinsmen, Palamon and Arcite. The rest of the Tales came as they were called for by the Host, or as they were volunteered by members of the company, subject always to his ruling.

The second tale was told by the Miller, who was consciously drunk, and insisted on coming next. The Host gave a grudging assent, as to a man in his condition, though he would rather have given the honour to the Monk, who, as holding the rank of Prior, was socially fitter to follow the Knight. The Miller was a churl, and told his coarse tale of Clerk Nicholas and the Carpenter in such a manner as was only to have been looked for in a man of his character. Yet, such as it was, the story forced a laugh from most of the company, and only one was aggrieved at it—viz., the Reeve—and that solely because it was at the expense of a carpenter, and he himself “was of carpenter’s craft.”

To quiet him, he was allowed to tell the next tale. The Miller’s was an Oxford story; the Reeve’s was of Cambridge, and told of an adventure which two Scots students at that university had with the miller of Trumpington.

The fourth story was to have been told by the Cook; but Chancer stuck at the fifty-eighth line, and we have therefore only the introduction to what promised to be just such another

story as the Reeve's or the Miller's. The Cook's hero was a revelling London apprentice of the name of Perkin.

The fifth in the series is of a quite different cast from the three that immediately precede it. It is the noble, tender, and pathetic story of Constance, daughter of the Roman Emperor, and is told by the Man of Law.

When the Lawyer had finished his story the Host called upon the Parish Priest for one. In doing so he used an oath, for which the clergyman at once reprovéd him. But the Host would not be reprovéd, called him a Lollard, and told the company to expect a sermon. The Shipman could not bear the idea of a sermon, and volunteered a story that would excite the attention of every one. His offer was taken, and he told a tale of the kind which the Miller had introduced, about a monk and a merchant.

The seventh tale was told by the Lady Prioress, upon whom the Host called with punctilious politeness. She gave a pathetic legend of Jewish cruelty, of the same type as the tragedy of little Hugh of Lincoln, though related of a Christian town in Asia.

The poet himself was then roused from a fit of abstraction by the boisterous Host, who demanded from him a merry story to counteract the sadness which had fallen upon the pilgrims during the recital of the child tragedy, so feelingly given by the Prioress. He accordingly began a tedious narrative of a certain Sir Thopas, but had scarcely got beyond the two hundredth line when the Host unceremoniously interrupted him as a failure. He might try again, and was even conceded the privilege of prose, but there was to be no more of Sir Thopas. The poet was humorously grateful for the concession, and undertook the story of Melibeus and his wife Prudence, on condition that he was to be heard to an end. This is the first prose tale in the series, and is both long and dull (at least to modern ears), though it seems to have pleased both the Host and the company.

The ninth tale, or rather succession of short tales, was related, on the Host's invitation, by the Abbot. They were all sad, and for that reason were interrupted at the seventeenth by the Knight. The Host approved of the interruption, and invited the Abbot to try again, to give them something of a cheerful nature, a hunting story (for example) or the like. The Abbot

did not seem well pleased to be interrupted, and, unlike the poet, preferred to remain silent.

One of the three Priests in attendance upon Madam Eglantine, the Lady Prioress, was called upon for the next tale. He favoured the company with the *fabliau* of the Cock and the Fox.

The Doctor told the next tale—the tragic story, taken from early Roman History, of Appius and Virginia.

The twelfth story-teller was the Pardoner, who thrilled the company with the sensational story of Death and the Three Rioters. Unfortunately for himself, he sought to make capital out of it by opening a sale of indulgences and an exhibition of relics. He proposed that the Host should be the first to pay for a sight of the relics and a paper pardon, because he was “most envoluped in sinne.” The audacious impudence of the proposal provoked a torrent of coarse abuse from the Host, at which the Pardoner shrunk in offended silence, till the Knight came forward as mediator, and with a few conciliatory words got them to kiss and be friends. The company were then ready to hear another tale.

It was told, after a long preamble about her own domestic experiences, by the Wife of Bath, and proved to be a fairy story of the strange wedding of one of King Arthur's Knights.

Meanwhile a feud had been developing between the Friar and the Summoner, very similar to that which had arisen between the Miller and the Reeve. After some bickering between the parties, which required the interference of the Host, the Friar told a story of a summoner's compact with a fiend.

The Summoner retaliated with a vulgar Yorkshire tale of a sick farmer and a friar.

Then, probably, came the Clerk of Oxford's story of patient Griselda. One of the most attentive listeners was the Merchant, who found in the character of the heroine a perfect contrast to that of his own wife, to whom he had been married only two months. The Host, to whom he frankly confided his domestic misery, promptly demanded a recital of particulars for the amusement of the company, but the grief of it was still too green to be dwelt upon by the unhappy husband in detail.

He would not, however, deny them a tale, and so he gave them the story of January and May, as a warning against the folly of an old man marrying a young wife.

The Squire was probably the next story-teller. His subject was the Great Khan of Tartary and his daughter Canace, who knew the language of birds. This is another of the unfinished tales of the series. It is commonly referred to—since Milton's time—as “half-told,” but in fact it is barely commenced, though it extends to over 700 lines.

The Franklin came next. After complimenting the Squire as a youth of great promise (he wished he could say as much of his own son!), he gave the company an Armorican story of a lady, Dorigen, who was loyal to both her husband and her lover.

The next narrator was the third lady of the company—the Nun in attendance, as chaplain, upon the Prioress. She told the story of Saint Cecilia and her husband, Valerian, and the angel that loved her.

Just as the Nun finished her tale the Pilgrims were joined by two men, a Canon and his servant, who had galloped hard for three miles on purpose to overtake them. Their horses were flecked with foam, and their faces ran with sweat. Neither of them was at all tidily dressed, and the servant's countenance was strangely discoloured. In private conversation with the servant, the Host discovered that the Canon was a multiplier or alchemist, and that, while partly a dupe to his own art, he was now partly maintaining himself by duping others. The Canon, overhearing this talk, charged his servant with slandering him, and ordered him to hold his peace; but, encouraged by the Host, the servant defied his master, and the latter, fearing a full exposure of his roguery, put spurs to his horse, and fled the company. The servant, or Canon's Yeoman as he is called, then told his tale of a multiplier and his victim.

The next story was, probably, the Manciple's. But, before he began, the company had some trouble with the Cook, who had been over-indulging in drink and had fallen off his horse. He was sobered, homeopathically, by a pull at the Manciple's flask. The Manciple's tale was the Transformation of the Crow.

Last of all came the Parson or Parish Priest's tale, which, like the Poet's tale of Melibeus, is also in prose: it proved to be a sermon on penitence.

No tale is found for the Ploughman, two of the Prioress's Priests, the five London tradesmen, and the Knight's Yeoman.

I. THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

THIS is the story of Palamon and Arcite. Chaucer follows in part, but with amplifications of his own, the story as it is told in the *Teseide* of Boccaccio. The subject had attracted him before the scheme of *The Canterbury Tales* was thought of, and the fragmentary *Amélide and Arcite*, which appears among his earlier minor poems, may be regarded as his first study of the theme. The final poem is an epic of 2250 lines, equal in length to *Paradise Regained*.

Dryden's paraphrase of *The Knight's Tale* is as noble a specimen of that vigorous author's verse as can be found anywhere in the *Fables*—which means anywhere in the whole body of his writings; and the story of Palamon and Arcite, so far as it is known to modern readers, is perhaps known best from this paraphrase. If Chaucer's language had been more intelligible, or his numbers less inharmonious, to the ears of the seventeenth century, it is probable that Dryden would not have sought to amend Chaucer by paraphrasing him. For his opinion of *The Knight's Tale* is as emphatic as words can express: "I prefer in Chaucer," he says, in the Preface to the *Fables*, "the noble poem of *Palamon and Arcite*, which is of the epic kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the *Iliad* or the *Æneid*: the story is more pleasing than either of them, the manners as perfect, the diction as poetical, the learning as deep and various, and the disposition full as artful. I had thought for the honour of our nation, and more particularly for his whose laurel, though unworthy, I have worn after him, that the story was of English growth, and Chaucer's own. It appears, however, that it was written before the time of Boccace; yet I question not but the poem has received many beauties by passing through Chaucer's noble hands."

The Two Noble Kinsmen, attributed to Shakespeare, is a dramatic rendering of the story of Palamon and Arcite.

Theseus of Athens, returning in triumph from conquered Scythia, leading with him his captive bride Hippolyta and her young sister Emily, is confronted, when almost at his city's gates, by a suppliant crowd of black-robed queens imploring his help against Creon, the usurper of Thebes, who denies funeral rites to their slaughtered lords. Theseus at once turns against Thebes, defeats and slays Creon, and devastates the district with fire and sword. Among the wounded are found two young knights, closely related, whom Theseus, refusing all ransom, carries with him to Athens, and keeps immured in a lofty tower.

This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,
Palamon Til it fil ones, in a morwe of May,
and Arcite That Emelye, that fairer was to seene
- rivals in Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,
love. And fressher than the May with floures newe
 (For with the rose colour strof hir hewe
 I not which was the fairer of hem two),
 Er it were day, as was hir wone to do,
 She was arisen, and al redy dight,
 For May wol have no slogardye anight. 10
 The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
 And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,
 And seith—"Arys, and do thyn observaunce."
 This maked Emelye have remembraunce
 To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
 Yclothed was she fresh, for to devyse;
 Hir yelwe heer was broyded in a tresse,
 Bihinde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse,
 And in the gardin at the sonne upriste
 She walketh up and down, and as hir list 20

She gadereth floures, party whyte and reede,
 To make a sotil gerland for hir heede,
 And as an aungel hevenly she song.

The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
 Which of the castel was the chief dongeon
 (Theras the knightes weren in prisoun,
 Of whiche I tolde yow, and telle shal),
 Was evene joynant to the gardin wal
 Theras this Emelye hadde hir pleyinge.
 Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morweninge, 30
 And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
 As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,
 Was risen, and romed in a chambre on heigh
 In which he al the noble citee seigh,
 And eek the gardin ful of braunches grene
 Theras this fresshe Emelye the shene
 Was in hir walk, and romed up and down.
 This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun,
 Goth in the chambre, roming to and fro,
 And to himself compleyning of his wo ; 40
 That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, " Alas !"
 And so bifel, by aventure or cas,
 That thurgh a window, thikke of many a barre
 Of yren, greet and square as any sparre,
 He caste his eye upon Emelya,
 And therwithal he bleynte, and cryede, " A !"
 As though he stongen were unto the herte.
 And with that crye Arcite anon upsterte,
 And seyde—" Cosin min, what eyleth thee
 That art so pale and deedly on to see ? 50
 Why crydestow ? who hath thee doon offence ?
 For Goddes love, tak al in pacience
 Our prisoun, for it may non other be :

Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.
 Som wikke aspect or disposicioun
 Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,
 Hath yeven us this, although we hadde it sworn :
 So stood the heven whan that we were born.
 We moste endure it. This is the short and pleyne."

This Palamon answerde and seyde ageyn— 60

"Cosin, forsothe, of this opinioun
 Thou hast a veyn imaginacioun.
 This prisoun caused me nat for to crye ;
 But I was hurt right now thurghout myn eye
 Into myn herte, that wol my bane be.
 The fairnesse of that lady that I see
 Yond in the gardin rome to and fro
 Is cause of al my crying and my wo.

I not wher she be womman or goddesse ;
 But Venus is it sothly, as I gesse." . . . 70

And with that word Arcite gan espye
 Wheras this lady romed to and fro ;
 And with that sighte hir beautee hurt him so
 That, if that Palamon was wounded sore,
 Arcite is hurt as muche as he or more.

And with a sigh he seyde pitously—
 "The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly
 Of hir that rometh in the yonder place ;
 And, but I have hir mercy and her grace,
 That I may seen her atte leste weye, 80

I nam but deed : ther nis namore to seye."
 This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde
 Despitously he lokede, and answerde—

"Whether seistow this in earnest or in pley?"

"Nay," quod Arcite, "in earnest, by my fey !
 God help me so, me list ful yvele pleye !"

This Palamon gan knitte his browes tweye :
 " It nere," quod he, " to thee no greet honour
 For to be fals, ne for to be traytour
 To me that am thy cosin and thy brother 90
 Ysworn ful deepe, and ech of us til other,
 That never, for to dyen in the peyne,
 Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,
 Neither of us in love to hindren other,
 Ne in non other cas, my leve brother,
 But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me
 In every cas, and I shal forthren thee :
 This was thyn oth, and myn also certeyn ;
 I wot right wel thou darst it nat withseyn.
 Thus artow of my counseil, out of doute. 100
 And now thou woldest falsly been aboute
 To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
 And ever shal til that myn herte sterve.
 Now, certes, fals Arcite, thou shalt nat so.
 I loved hir first, and tolde thee my wo
 As to my counseil and my brother sworn
 To forthre me, as I have told biforn ;
 For which thou art ybounden as a knight
 To helpen me, if it lay in thy might,
 Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn." 110

This Arcité ful proudly spak ageyn :
 " Thou shalt," quod he, " be rather fals than I.
 But thou art fals, I telle thee utterly ;
 For *par amour* I loved hir first er thow.
 What wiltow seyn ? Thou wistest nat yet now
 Whether she be a womman or goddesse !
 Thyn is affeccioun of holinesse,
 And myn is love as to a creature ;
 For which I tolde thee myn aventure

As to my cosin and my brother sworn. 120
 I pose that thou lovedest hir biforn—
 Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,
 That '*Who shal yeve a lover any lawe?*'?
 Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan,
 Than may be yeve to any erthly man!
 And therfore positif lawe and swich decree
 Is broke al day for love in ech degree.
 A man moot needes love maugre his heed.
 He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be deed,
 Al be she mayde or widwe or elles wyf. 130
 And eek it is nat likly, al thy lyf,
 To stonden in hir grace—namore shal I—
 For wel thou wost thyselfen, verrailly,
 That thou and I be dampned to prisoun
 Perpetuelly : us gayneth no raunsoun.
 We stryve as didle the houndes for the boon ;
 They foughte al day, and yet her part was noon—
 Ther cam a kyte whil that they weren wrothe,
 And bar away the boon bitwixe hem bothe.
 And therfore at the kinges court, my brother, 140
 Ech man for himself ; ther is non other.
 Love if thee list ; for I love, and ay shal.
 And sothly, leve brother, this is al."

At last Arcite, at the request of a friendly visitor at the court of Theseus, is granted his freedom, but with the condition that he must at once and, on pain of death, for ever leave Athenian ground. Alas! he has only exchanged bonds for banishment; and he finds too late that bonds with an occasional glimpse of Emily are preferable to liberty with banishment. What was before a prison now seems a paradise; and he envies Palamon. Meanwhile Palamon envies him.

After over a year's dreary residence in Thebes, Arcite determines to return disguised as a peasant to Athens, and dare even death for love of Emily. He is so far fortunate that he obtains a menial's place in the household of Emily; and he serves her chamberlain faithfully for a year. His obliging conduct and courteous manners soon make him known, and by-and-by he is promoted to a position of trust and honour at the court of Theseus, and becomes, as the years go by, still more and more endeared to the Athenian king.

Six years have passed, and the hapless Palamon is still in prison. At last he drugs the keeper and escapes. But the summer night is short, and he fears the daylight and detection. The first morning after his escape, therefore, finds him lurking in the woods, still in the vicinity of Athens. That day it was fated he should meet Arcite.

The bisy larke, messenger of day,

Salueth in hir song the morwe gray ;

The Fight And fryr Phebus ryseth up so brighte
in the That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
Forest. And with his stremes dryeth in the greves

The silver dropes hanging on the leves.

And Arcite, that is in the court royal 150

With Theseus, his squyer principal,

Is risen, and loketh on the merye day ;

And, for to doon his observaunce to May,

Remembring on the poynt of his desir,

He on a courser, sterting as the fyr,

Is riden into the feeldes him to pleye,

Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye ;

And to the grove, of which that I yow tolde,

By aventure his wey he gan to holde,

To maken him a gerland of the greves, 160
 Were it of wodebynde or hawethorn leves,
 And loude he song ageyn the sonne shene—
 “May, with alle thy floures and thy grene
 Welcome be thou, wel faire fresshe May!
 I hope that I som grene gete may;”
 And from his courser with a lusty herte
 Into the grove ful hastily he sterte;
 And in a path he rometh up and down
 Theras by aventure this Palamoun
 Was in a bush that no man mighte him see, 170
 For sore afered of his deeth was he.
 Nothing ne knew he that it was Arcite;
 God wot he wolde han trowed it ful lyte.
 But soth is seyde, gon sithen many yeres,
 That feeld hath eyen and the wode hath eres.
 It is ful fair a man to bere him evene,
 For alday meteth men at unset stevene.
 Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe
 That was so ny to herkennen al his sawe,—
 For in the bush he sitteth now ful stille. 180

Whan that Arcite had romed al his fille,
 And songen al the roundel lustily,
 Into a studie he fil sodeynly,
 As don thise loveres in hir queynte geres,—
 Now in the croppe, now down in the breres,
 Now up, now down, as boket in a welle.
 Right as the Friday, sothly for to telle,
 Now it shyneth, now it reyneth faste—
 Right so can gery Venus overcaste
 The hertes of hir folk; right as her day 190
 Is gerful, right so chaungeth she array.
 Selde is the Friday al the wyke ylyke.

Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to syke,
 And sette him doun withouten any more.
 "Alas," quod he, "that day that I was bore! . . .
 Allas! ybrought is to confusioun
 The blood royal of Cadme and Amphion;
 Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man
 That Thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan,
 And of that citee first was crowned king. 200
 Of his lineage am I, and his ofspring
 By verray lyne, as of the stock royal;
 And now I am so caitif and so thral
 That he that is my mortal enemy,
 I serve him as his squyer poorely.
 And yet doth Juno me wel more shame,
 For I dar noght biknowe myn owne name,
 But, theras I was wont to highte Arcite,
 Now highte I Philostrate, noght worth a myte.
 Allas, thou felle Mars! Allas, Juno! 210
 Thus hath your ire our kinrede al fordo,
 Save only me, and wreeched Palamoun,
 That Theseus martyreth in prisoun.
 And over al this, to sleen me utterly,
 Love hath his fyry dart so brenningly
 Ystiked thurgh my trewe careful herte,
 That shapen was my deeth erst than my sherte.
 Ye sleen me with your eyen, Emelye!
 Ye ben the cause wherfor that I dye.
 Of al the remenant of myn other care 220
 Ne sette I nat the mountaunce of a tare,
 So that I coude don aught to your plesaunce!"
 And with that word he fil down in a traunce. . . .

This Palamoun, that thoighte that thurgh his herte
 He felte a cold swerd sodeynliche glyde,

For ire he quook, no longer wolde he byde ;
 And, whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
 As he were wood, with face deed and pale,
 He sterte him up out of the buskes thikke,
 And seyde—"Arcite, false traitour wikke ! 230
 Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so,
 For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,
 And art my blood, and to my counseil sworn,
 As I ful ofte have told thee heerbiforn,
 And hast byjaped here duk Theseus,
 And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus—
 I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye !
 Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye,
 But I wol love hir only, and namo ;
 For I am Palamoun, thy mortal fo ! 240
 And thogh that I no wepne have in this place,
 But out of prisoun am astert by grace,
 I drede nought that outhur thou shalt dye,
 Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelye.
 Chees which thou wilt, for thou shalt nat asterte."

This Arcite, with ful despitous herte,
 Whan he him knew, and halde his tale herd,
 As fiers as leoun, pulled out a swerd,
 And seyde thus—"By God, that sit above,
 Nere it that thou art sik, and wood for love, 250
 And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,
 Thou sholdest never out of this grove pace,
 That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond !
 For I defye the seurtee and the bond
 Which that thou seyst that I have maad to thee.
 What, verray fool ! think wel that love is free ;
 And I wol love hir, maugre al thy might !
 But, forasmuche thou art a worthy knight,

And wilnest to darreyne hir by batayle,
 Have heer my trouthe ; tomorwe I wol nat fayle, 260
 Withouten witing of any other wight,
 That here I wol be founden as a knight,
 And bringen harneys right ynough for thee ;
 And chees the beste, and leve the worste for me.
 And mete and drinke this night wol I bringe
 Ynough for thee, and clothes for thy beddinge.
 And, if so be that thou my lady winne,
 And slee me in this wode ther I am inne,
 Thou mayst wel have thy lady, as for me."

This Palamoun answerde — " I graunte it thee." 270

And thus they ben departed til amorwe,
 When ech of hem hath leyd his feith to borwe.

Cleer was the morne, as any that ther is,
 And Theseus, with alle joye and blis,
 With his Ipolita, the fayre quene,
 And Emelye, clothed al in grene,
 On hunting be they riden royally.
 And to the grove, that stood ful faste by,
 In which ther was an hert, as men him tolde,
 Duk Theseus the streyte wey hath holde. 280
 And to the launde he rydeth him ful right,
 For thider was the hert wont have his flight,
 And over a brook, and so forth on his weye
 This duk wol han a cours at him or tweye
 With houndes swiche as that him list comaunde.

And, whan this duk was come unto the launde,
 Under the sonne he loketh, and anon
 He was war of Arcite and Palamon,

That foughten breme, as it were bores two.
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro 290
So hidously that with the leste strook
It seemed as it wolde felle an ook ;
But what they were, nothing he ne woot.
This duk his courser with his spores smoot,
And at a stert he was betwix hem two,
And pulled out a swerd and cryde—"Ho !
Namore, up peyne of lesing of your heed.
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be deed
That smyteth any strook that I may seen !
But telleth me what mister men ye been, 300
That ben so hardy for to fighten here
Withouten juge or other officere,
As it were in a listes really ?"

This Palamon answerde hastily,
And seyde—"Sire, what nedeth wordes mo ?
We han the deth deserved, bothe two.
Two woful wrecches been we, two caytives,
That ben encombred of our owne lyves ;
And, as thou art a rightful lord and juge,
Ne yeve us neyther mercy ne refuge. 310
But slee me first, for seynte charitee,
But slee my felawe eek as wel as me ;
Or slee him first, for, thogh thou knowe it lyte,
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite
That fro thy lond is banished on his heed,
For which he hath deserved to be deed ;
For this is he that cam unto thy gate
And seyde that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed thee ful many a yeer,
And thou hast maked him thy chief squyer ; 320
And this is he that loveth Emelye.

For, sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I make pleyedly my confessioun,
That I am thilke woful Palamoun
That hath thy prisoun broken wikkedly.
I am thy mortal fo ; and it am I
That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte
That I wol dye present in hir sighte.
Therefore I axe deth and my juyse ;
But slee my felawe in the same wyse, 330
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn."

This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,
And seyde—"This is a short conclusioun.
Your owne mouth by your confessioun
Hath dampned you, and I wol it recorde ;
It nedeth nought to pyne yow with the corde.
Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the rede !"

The queene anon, for verray womanhede,
Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye
And alle the ladies in the companye. 340
Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That ever swich a chaunce sholde falle ;
For gentilmen they were of gret estat,
And nothing but for love was this debat ;
And sawe hir bloody woundes wyde and sore ;
And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more—
"Have mercy, lord, upon us wommen alle !"
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,
And wolde han kist his feet theras he stood ;
Til atte laste aslaked wes his mood,— 350
For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.
And, though he first for ire quook and sterte,
He hath considered shortly in a clause

The trespass of hem bothe, and eek the cause ;
 And, although that his ire hir gilt accused,
 Yet in his resoun he hem bothe excused,
 As thus—He thoughte wel that every man
 Wol helpe himself in love if that he can,
 And eek deliver him out of prisoun ;
 And eek his herte had compassioun 360
 Of wommen, for they wepen evere in oon.
 And in his gentil herte he thoughte anon,
 And softe unto himself he seyde—“ Fy
 Upon a lord that wol have no mercy,
 But ben a leoun, bothe in word and dede,
 To hem that ben in repentaunce and drede
 As wel as to a proud despitous man
 That wol maynteyne that he first bigan !
 That lord hath litel of discrecioun
 That in such caas can no divisoun, 370
 But weyeth pryde and humblesse after oon.”

And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,
 He gan to loken up with eyen lighte,
 And spak thise same wordes al on highte—
 “The god of love, a ! *benedicite*,
 How mighty and how gret a lord is he !
 Ageyns his might ther gayneth noon obstacles ;
 He may be cleped a god for his miracles,
 For he can maken at his owne gyse
 Of everich herte as that him list devyse. 380
 Lo heer this Arcite and this Palamoun,
 That quitly weren out of my prisoun
 And mighte han lived in Thebes royally,
 And witen I am hir mortal enemy,
 And that hir deth lyth in my might also,—
 And yet hath love, maugre hir eyen two,

Ybrought hem hider bothe for to dye !
 Now, loketh ! is nat that an heigh folye ?
 Who may nat ben a fool if that he love ?
 Bihold ! for Goddes sake that sit above, 390
 See how they blede ! Be thy noght wel arrayed ?
 Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, ypayed
 Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse !
 And yet they wenen for to ben ful wyse
 That serven love, for aught that may bifalle !
 But this is yet the beste game of alle
 That she, for whom they han this jolitee,
 Can hem therfor as moche thank as me ;
 She woot namore of al this hote fare,
 Pardee, than wot a cokkow of an hare ! 400
 But al moot ben assayed, hoot and cold ;
 A man moot ben a fool, or yong or old ;
 I woot it by myself ful yore agoon,
 For in my tyme a servant was I oon.
 And therefore, sin I knowe of loves peyne,
 And woot how sore it can a man distreyne,
 As he that hath ben caught ofte in his laas,
 I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespaas
 At requeste of the Queene that kneleth here,
 And eek of Emelye, my suster dere, 410
 And ye shul bothe anon unto me swere
 That nevermo ye shul my contree dere,
 Ne make werre upon me, night ne day,
 But ben my freendes in al that ye may :
 I yow foryeve this trespas every del."

And they him swore his axing fayre and wel,
 And him of lordshipe and of mercy preyde ;
 And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde—
 "To speke of real linage and richesse,

Though that she were a queene or a princesse, 420
 Ech of yow bothe is worthy, doutelees,
 To wedden whan tyme is ; but nathelees,—
 I speke as for my suster Emelye
 For whom ye han this stryf and jelousye,—
 Ye wite yourself she may not wedden two
 At ones, though ye fighten evermo ;
 That oon of yow, al be him loth or leef,
 He moot go pypen in an ivyleef,—
 That is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,
 Al be ye never so jelous ne so wrothe. 430
 And forthy I yow putte in this degree
 That ech of yow shal have his destinee
 As him is shape. And herkneth in what wyse ;
 Lo, heer your ende of that I shal devyse :—

My wil is this, for plat conclusioun
 Withouten any replicacioun,—
 If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,—
 That everich of yow shal gon wher him leste
 Frely withouten raunson or daunger,
 And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner, 440
 Everich of yow shal bringe an hundred knightes
 Armed for listes up at alle rightes,
 Al redy to darreyne hir by bataille.
 And this bihote I yow, withouten faille,
 Upon my trouthe, and as I am a knight,
 That whether of yow bothe that hath might,—
 This is to sayn, that whether he or thou
 May with his hundred as I spak of now
 Sleen his contrarie, or out of listes dryve,—
 Him shal I yeven Emelye to wyve 450
 To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a grace.
 The listes shal I maken in this place ;

And God so wisly on my soule rewe
 As I shal even juge ben and trewe.
 Ye shul non other ende with me maken
 That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.
 And, if yow thinketh this is wel ysayd,
 Seyeth your avys and holdeth yow apayd.
 This is your end and your conclusioun."

Who loketh lightly now but Palamoun? 460
 Who springeth up for joye but Arcite?
 Who couthe telle, or who couthe it endyte,
 The joye that is made in the place
 Whan Theseus hath don so fair a grace?
 But down on knees wente every maner wight,
 And thanked him with al hir herte and might,
 And namely the Thebans oftesythe.
 And thus, with good hope and with herte blythe,
 They take hir leve, and homward gonne they ryde
 To Thebes with his olde walles wyde. 470

Gret was the feste in Athenes that day,
 And eek the lusty sesoun of that May

The Fight Made every wight to ben in swich plesaunce
in the That al that Monday jousten they and daunce
Lists. And spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.

But, by the cause that they sholde ryse
 Erly for to seen the grete fight,
 Unto hir reste wente they at night.
 And on the morwe, whan that day gan springe,
 Of hors and harneys noyse and clateringe 480
 Ther was in the hostelryes al aboute ;
 And to the paleys rood ther many a route
 Of lordes upon stedes and palfreys.
 Ther maystow seen devysing of herneys

So uncouth and so riche, and wrought so weel
 Of goldsmithrye, of browding, and of steel ;
 The sheeldes brighte, testers, and trappures,
 Goldhewen helmes, hauberks, cote armures ;
 Lordes in parements on hir courseres ;
 Knightes of retenue, and eek squyeres 490
 Nailing the speres, and helmes bokelinge,
 Giggig of sheeldes, with layneres lacing,—
 Theras need is they weren nothing ydel ;
 The fomy steedes on the golden brydel
 Gnawinge, and faste the armurers also
 With fyle and hamer priking to and fro ;
 Yeman on fote, and communes many oon
 With shorte staves thikke as they may goon ;
 Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariounes, 500
 That in the bataille blowen bloody sounes ;
 The paleys ful of peple up and doun,
 Heer three, ther ten, holding hir questioun
 Divyninge of thise Theban knightes two :—
 Somme seyden thus, somme seyde “ it shall be so ” ;
 Somme helden with him with the blake berd ;
 Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke herd ;
 Somme seyde he loked grim and he wolde fighte—
 “ He hath a sparthe of twenty pound of wighte.”
 Thus was the halle ful of divyninge
 Longe after that the sonne gan to springe. 510

The grete Theseus, that of his sleep awaked
 With minstraleye and noyse thet was maked,
 Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche,
 Til that the Thebane knightes, both yliche
 Honoured, were into the paleys fet.
 Duk Theseus was at a window set,
 Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.

The peple preesseth thiderward ful sone
 Him for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,
 And eek to herkne his hest and his sentence. 520

An heraud on a scaffold made an hoo,
 Til al the noyse of peple was ydo ;
 And, whan he saugh the peple of noyse al stille,
 Tho shewed he the mighty dukes wille :
 "The lord hath of his heigh discrecioun
 Considered that it were destruccioun
 To gentil blood to fighten in the gyse
 Of mortal bataille now in this empyse ;
 Wherfor, to shapen that they shul not dye,
 He wol his firste purpos modifye. 530

No man, therfor, up peyne of los of lyf,
 No maner shot, ne pollax, ne short knyf
 Into the listes sende, or thider bringe ;
 Ne short swerd for to stoke, with poynt bytinge,
 No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde ;
 Nor no man shal unto his felawe ryde
 But o cours, with a sharp ygrounde spere, --
 Foyne, if him list, on fote, himself to were.
 And he that is at meschief shal be take
 And nat slayn, but be brought unto the stake 540
 That shal ben ordeyned on either syde ;
 Thider he shal by force, and ther abyde.
 And if so falle the cheventein be take
 On either syde, or elles slee his make,
 No lenger shal the turneyinge laste.
 God spede yow ! go forth and ley on faste !
 With long swerd and with maces fight your fille !
 Goth now your wey : this is the lordes wille."

The voyse of peple touchede the hevene,
 So loude cryden they with mery stevene -- 550

"God save swich a lord that is so good,
 He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!"
 Up gon the trompes and the melodye,
 And to the listes rit the companye
 By ordinaunce thurghout the citee large,
 Hanged with cloth of gold, and nat with sarge.
 Ful lyk a lord this noble duk gan ryde,
 Thise two Thebanes upon either syde;
 And after rood the quene and Emelye,
 And after that another companye
 Of oon and other after hir degree.
 And thus they passen thurghout the citee,
 And to the listes come they by tyme.
 It nas nat of the day yet fully pryme
 Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,
 Ipolite the quene and Emelye,
 And other ladyes in degrees aboute.
 Unto the seetes precesseth al the route.

560

And westward, thurgh the gates under Marte,
 Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,
 With baner reed is entred right anon.
 And, in that selve moment, Palamon
 Is under Venus, estward in the place,
 With baner whyt, and hardy chere and face.

570

In al the world to seken up and down,
 So even, withouten variacioun,
 Ther nere swiche companyes tweye;
 For ther nas noon so wys that coude seye
 That any hadde of other avauntage
 Of worthinesse, ne of estaat, ne age,—
 So even were they chosen, for to gesse.
 And in two renges faire they hem dresse.

580

Whan that hir names rad were everychoon,
 That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,
 Tho were the gates shet, and cryed was loude—
 “Do now your devoir, yonge knightes proude !”

The heraudes lefte hir priking up and down ;
 Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun ;
 Ther is namore to seyn but, west and est,
 In gon the speres ful sadly in arest ; 590
 In goth the sharpe spore into the syde.
 Ther seen men who can juste and who can ryde ;
 Ther shiveren shaftes upon sheeldes thikke ;
 He feleth thurgh the hertespoon the prikke.
 Upspringen speres twenty foot on highte ;
 Out gon the swerdes as the silver brighte.
 The helmes they tohewen and toshrede ;
 Out brest the blood, with sterne stremes rede ;
 With mighty maces the bones they tobreste. 599
 He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste.
 Ther stomblen stedes stronge, and doun goth al !
 He rolleth under foot as doth a bal ;
 He foyneth on his feet with his tronchoun ;
 And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun ;
 He thurgh the body is hurt, and sithen ytake,
 Maugre his heed, and broght unto the stake,
 As forward was, right ther he moste abyde ;
 Another lad is on that other syde.
 And som tyme doth hem Theseus to reste,
 Hem to refresshe, and drinken if hem leste. 610

Ful ofte aday han thise Thebanes two
 Togidre ymet, and wroght his felawe wo ;
 Unhorsed hath each other of hem tweye.

Ther nas no tigre in the vale of Galgopheye,
 Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is lyte,
 So cruel on the hunte, as is Arcite
 For jelous herte upon this Palamoun.
 Nin Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun
 That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
 Ne of his preye desireth so the blood, 620
 As Palamon to sleen his fo Arcite.
 The jelous strokes on hir helmes byte;
 Out renneth blood on both hir sydes rede.
 Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede;
 For, er the sonne unto the reste wente,
 The stronge king Emetrius gan hente
 This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,
 And made his swerd depe in his flessch to byte;
 And by the force of twenty is he take
 Unyolden, and ydrawe unto the stake. 630
 And in the rescous of this Palamoun
 The stronge king Ligurge is born adoun;
 And king Emetrius, for al his strengthe,
 Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,
 So hitte him Palamon er he was take;
 But al for noght he was broght to the stake.
 His hardy herte mighte him helpe naught;
 He moste abyde whan that he was caught
 By force and eek by composicioun.

Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun 640
 That moot namore gon agayn to fighte?
 And, whan that Theseus had seyn this sighte,
 Unto the folk that foghten thus echoon
 He cryde—"Hoo! namore! for it is doon!
 I wol be trewe juge, and no partye;
 Arcyte of Thebes shal have Emelye,

That by his fortune hath his laue ywonne.
 Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne
 For yere of this, so loude and heigh withalle,
 It semed that the listes sholde falle. . . .

650

The trompes with the loude minstralcy,
 The heraudes that ful loude yolle and crye,
 Been in hir wele for joye of daun Arcyte.
 But herkneth me, and stinteth now a lyte,
 Which a miracle ther bifel anon.

This fierse Arcite hath of his helm ydon,
 And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
 He priketh endelong the large place,
 Loking upward upon his Emelye ;
 And she agayn him caste a frendliche ye—

660

For wommen, as to speken in comune,
 They folwen al the favour of fortune—
 And she was al his chere as in his herte.
 Out of the ground a fyr infernal sterte,
 From Pluto sent at requeste of Saturne,
 For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
 And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep ;
 And, er that Arcite may taken keep,
 He pighte him on the pomel of his heed,
 That in the place he lay as he were deed,
 His brest tobrosten with his sadel bowe.

670

As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,—
 So was the blood yronnen in his face.
 Anon he was yborn out of the place
 With herte soor to Theseus paleys.
 Tho was he corven out of his harneys,
 And in a bed ybrought ful faire and blyve,
 For he was yet in memorie and alyve,
 And alway crying after Emelye.

The injury was mortal. Before his death Arcite sent for his rival and Emily, and took of them an affectionate farewell. Addressing Emily, he knew no one in the whole world, he said, so worthy to be loved as Palamon, and begged, with his last breath, that if ever she should think of marrying, not to forget Palamon, "the gentle man." The funeral ceremony at the obsequies of Arcite was on a scale of unusual magnificence; and, after a long interval of time devoted to mourning, Theseus himself sent for Emily and her surviving lover, and, agreeably to the last wishes of Arcite, gave his sanction to their marriage.

NOTES.

10-13. *Vide* Dunbar's fine Chaucerian poem, *The Thrissil and the Rois*, stanzas 4 and 6.

46, 47. It is a very similar scene that is described in *The King's Quair* :—

" And therewith kest I doun myn eye ageyne,
 Quhare-as I sawe, walking under the toure,
 Full secretly new cummyn hir to pleyne,
 The fairest or the freschest yonge floure
 That ever I sawe, methoght, before that houre;
 For quhich sodayn abate, anon astert
 The blude of all my body to my hert."

—Stanza 40.

The Scottish king was a close student of Chaucer, and, when he wrote the poem (1423), had in memory, if not actually before him, the passage in *The Knight's Tale* which describes Palamon's first view of Emily.

56. *Saturne*. A planet of malign influence.

57. *although we hadde it sworn* (*sc.*, to the contrary, or that it should not be so). Cf. *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* :—

" Walke I wolde, as I had doon biforn,
 From hous to hous, although he had it sworn."

58. Our horoscope foretold it.

69. So, smitten with her charms, the prince takes Miranda for a goddess, and Comus the Lady.

81. *I nam but deed.* See French idioms, p. xxxvi.

86. *me list ful yde pleye.* I am in no mood for jesting; more literally—it pleases me very badly (*i.e.*, not at all) to jest.

92. *for to dyen in the peyne.* Under mortal torture even. Cf. *Troilus and Criseyde*, iii. 1502, “to dyen in the peyne, I coude nought,”—*i.e.*, I could not do it, even though I were subjected to mortal torture to make me do it.

100. *of my counseil.* In my confidence. Six lines below *counseil* has the meaning of “confidant”; see l. 120.

123. “*Quis legem det amantibus?*” The “olde clerke” of the preceding line is Boethius, with whose book on *The Consolation of Philosophy* Chaucer was well acquainted. The question is from him; and he gives the answer—“*Major lex amor est sibi*” (l. 124). Cf. the common saying, “Everything’s fair in love and war.”

127. *in ech degree.* Among people of every rank.

128. *meuyre his heed.* In spite of himself or all he could do, though he disapproved. See l. 606.

131. *al thy lyf.* At any time in your life.

135. *us gayneth no ransoun.* No ransom is of any avail for us. Theseus refused ransom.

160, 161. See Herrick’s fine lyric, *To Corinna to go a-maying*, for a description of the observance of May-Day in Old England.

175. Cf. the proverb, “Stone walls have ears.”

176. *to bere him evene.* To conduct himself with caution.

177. Translate—For one is always meeting (people) unexpectedly.

184. *in hir queynte geres.* In their queer, changeable ways. So Venus, goddess of love, is described at l. 189 as *gerȝ*, *i.e.*, changeable.

187. Friday is Venus’s day. The weather of Fridays is said to be changeable. Frige-dæg, the day of love.

193. Cf. the conduct of Silvius in *As You Like It*, Act II. sc. iv.

197. The fable of Amphion and his lyre in the mythical history of Thebes is too well known to need narrating (*morit Amphion lapides canendo*).

205. I serve him (Theseus) as his squire, disguising my rank.

217. *erst than my sherte*—*i.e.*, from the very moment of my birth.

233. My cousin, and my confidant sworn.

249. *sit.* Sitteth. So *rit* for *rideth*, *bit* for *biddeth*, *stant* for *standeth*, &c.—a common contraction in Chaucer.

254. This line contains another instance of bilingualism.

272. *leyd his feith to borwe.* Pledged his word; laid his faith in

pledge. Cf. "Venus to berwe"; "St Bride to borrow" (in *Marmion*), &c. — names given in pledge of the speaker's sincerity.

287. *Under the sonne*. Shading his eyes with his hand. The whole scene is presented with charming realism and clearness of detail.

297. *up peyne*. Upon pain; under penalty.

303. *really*. Royally. The Anglo-French form is preserved in Sangreal, Montreal, realm.

312. There is no mawkish sentiment in those heroes.

351. A favourite line with Chaucer; he uses it repeatedly.

398. That is, of course, owes them no thanks at all.

400. The folly of the cuckoo and the madness of the hare are proverbial. In Scotland a gowk (cuckoo) is used metaphorically for a fool.

404. *a servaunt was I oon*. I was a lover myself, or in the same way.

417. *of lordshipe and of mercy preyde*. Entreated him for pardon and protection.

428. *pypen in an ivyleef*. Pipe in an ivy-leaf; go whistle (as if to hide one's chagrin). So in *Troilus and Criseyde*—

"But Troilus, thou mayst now, est or west,
Pype in an ivy leef, if that thee lest."

—Bk. v. ll. 1432, 1433.

Cf. old refrain—"Holly go whistle and ivy."

431-434. Translate—And therefore I put you in the position where each of you shall have the fate that is in store for him. And hearken how: here is your destiny by what I shall ordain.

440. *fer ne ner*. Neither more nor less (lit., farther nor nearer).

442. Fully or duly armed for the lists.

At alle rightes=properly in all respects.

453, 454. Meaning, may God indeed have no mercy upon my soul if I do not judge truly and justly between you.

458. Say so, and be satisfied.

471 *scqq*. All that follows is a splendidly realistic and detailed description of a medieval tournament, such as Chaucer himself witnessed in 1390; see Chronology. See also Sir Walter Scott's use of this description in *Ivanhoe*, from chap. vii. onward.

471. A year must be supposed to have elapsed.

521. *made an hoo*. Shouted ho! for attention. "Hue" in hue-and-cry is the same word; O.Fr. *huer*, to shout (onomatopoeitic). See l. 644.

523. *noyse*. This is probably different from the *noyse that was maked* at l. 512: in any case, the conjunction of "minstralcy" and "maked noyse" would have pleased Dr Johnson.

564. *nat* . . . *yet fully pryme*. Not quite nine o'clock.

590. *sadly in arest*. Firmly into the rest.

597. *tohewen*. The prefix is intensive. There is an instance of this usage in Judges (ix. 53)—“A certain woman cast a piece of a mill-stone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake [completely shattered] his skull.” See Grammatical Note, p. xxxi.

600. *He* . . . *he*=one . . . another.

608. *Another lad is*. Another is led (away captive).

614. Scan—

Ther nas | no ti | gr' in th' vale | of Gal | gophey | ē.

Dr Morris points out that Chaucer probably meant Gargaphie (Ovid's *Metam.*, iii. 156): [Vallis]—

“Nomine Gargaphie, succinctæ sacra Dianæ.”

618. *Belmarye*. A Moorish kingdom in Africa.

634. Cf. Scott (*Lady of the Lake*)—

“Scarce a spear's length from his haunch
Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds staunch.”

—I. vii.

655. *Which a*. Such, or so great a.

661, 662. Women generally worship success. There is no sarcasm in simple fact.

663. *she was al his chere as in his herte*. She was the only object of his gaze, as she was the one object of his heart. He had eyes for her only in all that bright assembly. Other interpretations are offered. One authority only (the Harleian MS.) gives *she* before *was*.

678. *yet in memorie*. Still conscious.

II. FROM THE MILLER'S TALE.

[The portrait of the Oxford clerk here presented should be studied comparatively with that of the other Oxford clerk in the Prologue.]

WHYLOM ther was dwellinge at Oxenford

The A riche gnof that gestes heeld to bord ;
Student in And of his craft he was a carpenter.
Lodgings. With him ther was dwellinge a povre scoler

Had lerned art, but al his fantasye

Was turned for to lerne astrologye. . . .

 This clerk was cleped hende Nicholas.

Of derne love he coude, and of solas ;

And therto he was sleigh and ful privee,

And lyk a mayden meke for to see.

10

A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye

Allone, withouten any companye,

Full fetisly y-dight with herbes swote,—

And he himself as swete as is the rote

Of licorys or any cetewale.

His Almageste and bokes grete and smale,

His astrolabie longing for his art,

His augrim stones layen faire apart

On shelves couched at his beddes heed,

His presse y-covered with a falding reed,

20

And al above ther lay a gay sautrye

On which he made a-nightes melodye

So swetely that al the chambre rong,
 And "*Angelus ad virginem*" he song,
 And after that he song *The Kinges Note*:
 Ful often blessed was his mery throte.
 And thus this swete clerk his tyme spent
 After his frendes finding and his rente.

NOTES.

2. *that gestes heeld to bord.* That kept boarders.

11. *hostelrye.* Lodging.

15. *licorys.* Liquorice (lit., sweet root), corrupted form of glycyrrhiza: extract of this root is familiar in stick liquorice (or black-sugar).

cetewale. O.Fr. *citoad*, from Arabic *jedwar*, zedoary: this root, found in India and China, is aromatic, and used for similar purposes with ginger.

16. *Almagest.* Arabic name of Ptolemy the astrologer's great work.

17. *astrolabe.* Gr. *ástron*, a star, *lumbino*, I take; Greek name for a circular instrument for "taking the stars." Chaucer wrote a (prose) treatise on the Astrolabe, for the instruction of his little son Lewis. "In the palmy days of astrology," we read, "a projection of the sphere upon a plane, with a graduated rim and sights for taking altitudes, was known as an Astrolabe" (Chambers's Encyc.)

longing for his art. Suitable for, belonging to the practice of, astrology. Cf. *Squire's Tale*—"That coude his colours longing for that art."

18. *augrim stones.* For calculating. *Augrim*, which Chaucer uses for numeration, and also for numerals, in his *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, is by contraction for algorism.

19. Cf. "him was lever have at his beddes heed twenty bokes" in the Prol. (*Clerk of Oxenford*).

20. *a falding red.* Red baize, probably. See portrait of Shipman in the Prol.: the shipman wore "a gowne of falding," a coarse woollen material.

24. The hymn belongs to about 1250-1260 : see Dr Furnivall's Six-Text Chaucer for words and music. It begins—

“ Angelus ad virginem
 Subintrans in conclave,
 Virginis formidinem
 Demulcens, inquit *Ave!*
Ave! regina virginum,” &c.

Thus translated—

“ Gabriel from 'Evene King
 Sent to the maide swete,
 Broute hire blisful tiding,
 And faire he gan hire grete,” &c.

25. *The Kinges Note.* Apparently the name of some tune.

26. *blessed.* By his delighted listeners.

28. “To find” in the sense of “to provide” is still in use : all found=every necessary furnished or supplied.

III. FROM THE REEVE'S TALE.

AT Trumpington, nat fer fro Cantebrigge,

How a Ther goth a brook, and over that a brigge,
Miller Upon the whiche brook ther stant a melle,
outwitted And this is verray soth that I yow telle. . . .
two

Scottish

Students.

Gret soken hath the miller, out of doute,

With whete and malt of all the land aboute ;

And namely ther was a gret collegge,

Men clepen the Soler Halle at Cantebregge,

Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt ygrounde.

And on a day it happed, in a stounde, 10

Sik lay the maunciple on a maledye ;

Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye.

For which this miller stal both mele and corn

An hundred time more than biforn ;

For therbiforn he stal but curteisly,

But now he was a theef outrageously.

For which the wardeyn chidde and made fare ;

But therof sette the miller nat a tare :

He crakked boost, and swoor it was not so.

Than were ther yonge povre clerkes two

20

That dwelten in this Halle of which I seye.

Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye ;

And, only for hir mirthe and revelrye,

Upon the wardeyn bisily they crye

To yeve hem leve but a litel stounde
 To gon to melle and seen hir corn ygrounde,
 And hardily—they dursten leye hir nekke—
 The miller shold nat stele hem half a pekke
 Of corn by sleighte, ne by fors hem reve :
 And atte last the wardeyn yaf hem leve. 30
 John hight that oon, and Aleyn hight that other.
 Of o toun were they born, that highte Strother,
 Fer in the north—I cannat telle where.

This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,
 And on an hors the sak he caste anon.
 Forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also John,
 With good swerd and with bokeler by hir side.
 John knew the wey, ther nedede hem no gyde.
 And at the mille the sak adoun he layth.
 Aleyn spak first—"Al hail, Symond, i faith ! 40
 How fares thy faire doghter and thy wyf ?"
 "Aleyn ! welcome," quod Simkin, "by my lyf !
 And John also ;—how now ? what do ye heer ?"
 "Symond," quod John, "pardec, nede has na peer.
 Him boes serve himself that has na swayn,
 Or elles he is a fomme as clerkes sayn.
 Our manciple—I hope he wil be deed,
 Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed.
 And therfor is I come, and eek Aleyn,
 To grinde our corn, and carie it ham ageyn. 50
 I prey yow spede us hethen as ye may."
 "It shall be doon," quod Simkin, "by my fay !
 What wol ye doon whyl that it is in honde ?"
 Quod John—"Right by the hopper wil I stonde,
 And see," quod he, "how that the corn gas in.
 Yet saugh I never, by my fader kin,
 How that the hopper wagges til and fra."

Aleyn answerde—"John, and wiltow swa?
 Than wil I be bynethe, by my croun,
 And see how that the mele falles down 60
 Into the trough: that sal be my disport,
 For, John, i faith, I may been of your sort—
 I is as ille a miller as are ye."

This miller smyled of hir nycetee,
 And thoghte—"All this nis doon but for a wyle:
 They wenen that no man may hem begyle;
 But, by my thrift, yet shal I blere hir ye,
 For al hir sleighte and hir philosophye.
 The more queynte crekes that they make,
 The more wol I stele whan I take. 70
 Instede of flour yet wol I yeve hem bren;
 The grettest clerkes been noght the wysest men."

Out at the dore he goth ful prively
 Whan that he saugh his tyme sotely.
 He loketh up and down till he hath founde
 The clerkes hors theras it stood ybounde
 Bihind the mille, under a levesel,
 And to the hors he goth ful faire and wel.
 He strepeth of the brydel right anon;
 And whan the hors was loos he gan to gon 80
 Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne,
 Forth with *wheee* thurgh thikke and eek thurgh themne.

This miller goth agayn, and no word seyde,
 But doth his note, and with the clerkes pleyde,
 Til that hir corn was faire and wel ygrounde.
 And, whan the mele is sakked and ybounde,
 This John goth out, and fynt his hors away,
 And gan to crye "Harrow!" and "Weylaway!"

Our hors is lorn ! Aleyn, for Goddes banes !
 Step on thy feet ; com out, man, al at anes ! 90
 Allas ! our wardeyn hath his palfrey lorn !”

This Aleyn al forgeteth mele and corn,
 Al was out of his mynde his housbondrye :
 “ What ! whilk wey is he geen ? ” he gan to crye.

The milleres wyf cam leping with a ren—
 She seyde—“ Allas ! your hors goth to the fen
 With wilde hors as faste as he may go :
 Unthank come on his hand that bond him so,
 And he that bettre sholde han knit the reyne ! ”

“ Aleyn,” quod John, “ now han we bisy peyne : 100
 Lay down thy swerd, and I wil myn als wa ;
 I is ful wight, God wat, as is a ra ;
 By corpus, but he sal nat scape us bathe.
 Why nadstow pit the capul in the lathe ?
 Il hayl, Aleyn ! i faith, thou is a fonne ! ”

Thise sely clerkes han full fast yronne
 Toward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek John.
 And, whan the miller saugh that they were gon,
 He half a busshel of hir flour hath take,
 And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake. 110
 He seyde—“ I trowe, the clerkes were aferd !
 Yet can a miller make a clerkes berd
 For al his art ; now lat hem gon hir weye.
 Lo wher they gon ! ye, lat the children pleye !
 They geten him nat so lightly, by my croun ! ”

Thise sely clerkes rennen up and down
 With—“ Keep, keep ! stand, stand ! jossa ! warde rere !

Ga whistly thou, and I shal kepe him here !”
 But, shortly, til that it was verray night,
 They coude nat, though they diden al hir might, 120
 Hir capul cacche, he ran away so faste ;
 Than in a dich they caughte him atte laste.

Wery and wete as bestes in the reyn
 Comth sely John, and with him comth Aleyn.
 “Allas,” quod John, “the day that I was born !
 Now are we drive til hething and til scorn.
 Our corn is stole, men wil us foles calle,
 Bathe the wardeyn, and eek our felawes alle,
 And namely the miller—weylaway !”
 Thus pleyneþ John as he goth by the way 130
 Toward the mille, and Bayard in his hond.
 The miller sitting by the fyr he fond,
 For it was night ; and forther mighte they noght.
 But, for the love of God, they him bisoght
 Of herberwe and of ese, as for hir peny.
 The miller seyde agayn—“ If ther be eny,
 Swich as it is, yet shal ye have your part.
 My hous is streit, but ye han lerned art ;
 Ye conne by argumentes make a place
 A myle brood of twenty foot of space. 140
 Lat see now if this place may suffyse ;
 Or make it roum with speche, as is your gyse.”

“Now, Symond,” seyde John, “by Seint Cutberd,
 Ay is thou mery, and this is faire answerd.
 I have herd sey, man sal take of twa thinges
 Slyk as he fynt, or tak slyk as he bringes.
 But specially I pray thee, hoste dere,
 Get us som mete and drinke, and make us chere,
 And we wil payen trewely atte fulle.

With empty hond, men may na haukes tulle. 150
 Lo, here our silver redy for to spende."
 The miller into toun his doghter sende
 For ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,
 And bonde hir hors it sholde nat gon loos,
 And in his owne chambre hem made a bed
 With shetes and with chalons faire yspred. . . .
 Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place.
 They soupen, and they speke, hem to solace,
 And dronken ever strong ale atte beste.
 Aboute midnight wente they to reste. 160

NOTES.

1. *Cantebrigge*. Cambridge; anciently Grantabrygge.

49. *He crakked boost*. He took a high key; remonstrated with a loud voice, like injured honesty.

32. *Strother*. Perhaps Anstruther, in the east of Fife.

44. *nede has na pcer*. Necessity has no equal; we cannot oppose necessity. It may be noted that Chaucer's use of the Scottish dialect is correct, and argues intimate acquaintance with the northern character.

84. *doth his note*. Attends to his task: Old Eng. *notu*, work or business.

90. Good northern idiom, revealing character.

112. *make a clerkes berd*. Trim him; outwit or delude him.

117. *Keep*. Scot. "catch": cf. Scot. proverb—"Ilka blade o' grass keps its ain drap o' dew."

jossa. O. Fr. *jos ça* = down here!

warde vere. Look out behind; look about.

118. *Go whistly!* Go quietly. Cf. Milton (*Hymn on the Nativity*, v.) -

"The winds, with wonder whist,
 Smoothly the waters kissed."

143. He swears by a northern saint.

150. Without a lure. The metaphor is from the art of hawking.

151. *silver*. Money (Scot. *siller*).

IV. THE LAWYER'S TALE.

THE story of Constance may have been written by Chaucer before he had conceived the idea of *The Canterbury Tales*. Some scholars attribute it to the year 1385. It would of course be an easy matter for its author to fit it into the scheme of the Canterbury Pilgrimage.

Gower tells the same story in the Second Book of *Confessio Amantis*, and it was at one time thought that Chaucer had borrowed the story from his friend and contemporary. Gower's version of the story is, however, of later date than Chaucer's; and it is now believed that both drew from the *Anglo-Norman Chronicle* of Nichol Trivet, an English Black Friar, who related the story of Constance in the aforesaid Chronicle at least half a century before the composition of *The Knight's Tale*. Chaucer follows Trivet very faithfully in the main, but has several poetical additions and many poetical modifications, such as one would look in vain for in the dull version of Gower.

The measure is rime royal.

THE Sultan of Syria, smitten with the charms (as reported to him by travelling merchants) of Constance, the young and lovely daughter of the Roman Emperor, is a suitor for the hand of the fair princess, and is accepted on condition that he and all his nobility shall adopt the Christian faith. So great is his love that he readily agrees, and Constance is sent into Syria to be married to him. The Sultan's mother, however, has plotted a terrible revenge for her son's defection from the Mohammedan faith. Outwardly acquiescing in all her son's arrangements, she submits with the members of

her party to baptism—"Cold water," she says, "will not grieve us but a little"—and, inviting the new-made Christians to a banquet, given in honour of the arrival of the bride, she orders, and sees executed, the massacre of every guest, the Sultan himself included. Constance is spared, but only, it would seem, for a crueller fate. She is hurried into a rudderless boat, but scantily provisioned, and thrust forth into the salt sea to find her way back to Italy as best she might.

She dryveth forth into our ocean

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| The For- tunes of Princess Constance in Nor- thumbria. | Thurghout our wilde see, til, atte laste, Under an hold that nempnen I ne can, Fer in Northumberlond the wawe hir caste ; And in the sond hir ship stiked so faste That themmes wolde it noght of al a tyde : The wille of Crist was that she shulde abyde. | 7 |
|---|--|---|

The Constable of the castel down is fare

To seen this wrak ; and al the ship he soghte,
 And fond this very womman ful of care ;
 He fond also the tresor that she broghte.
 In hir langage mercy she bisoghte
 The lyf out of hir body for to twinne
 Hir to delivere of wo that she was inne.

14

A maner Latin corrupt was hir speche,

But algates therby was she understonde.
 The Constable, whan him list no lenger seche,
 This woful womman broghte he to the londe.
 She kneleth doun, and thanketh Goddes sonde ;
 But what she was she wolde no man seye
 For foul ne fair, thogh that she shulde deye.

21

She seyde she was so mased in the see
 That she forgat hir mynde, by hir trouthe.
 The Constable hath of hir so gret pitee,
 And eek his wyf, that they wepen for routhe.
 She was so diligent, withouten slouthe,
 To serve and plesen everich in that place
 That alle hir loven that loken on her face. 28

This Constable and dame Hermengild his wyf
 Were payens, and that contree everywhere ;
 But Hermengild lovede hir ryght as hir lyf ;
 And Custance hath so longe sojourned there,
 In orisons, with many a bitter tere,
 Til Jesu hath converted thurgh hir grace
 Dame Hermengild, constablesse of that place. 35

In al that lond no Cristen durste route :
 Alle Cristen folk ben fled fro that contree
 Thurgh payens, that conquereden al aboute
 The plages of the north, by lond and see.
 To Walis fled the Cristianitee
 Of olde Britons dwellinge in this yle :
 Ther was hir refut for the mene whyle. 42

But yet nere Cristen Britons so exyled
 That ther nere somme that in hir privitee
 Honoured Crist, and hethen folk bigyled ;
 And ny the castel swiche ther dwelten three.
 That oon of hem was blynd, and mighte nat see—
 But it were with thilke yen of his mynde, 48
 With whiche men seen whan that they ben blynde.

Bright was the sonne as in that someres day ;
 For which the Constable, and his wyf also,

And Custance han ytake the ryghte way
 Toward the see, a furlong wey or two,
 To playen and to romen to and fro ;
 And in hir walk this blynde man they mette,
 Croked and old, with yen fast yshette. 56

“In name of Crist,” cryde this blynde Britoun,
 “Dame Hermengild, yif me my syghte agayn !”
 This lady wex affrayed of the soun,
 Lest that her housbond, shortly for to sayn,
 Wolde hir for Jesu Cristes love han slayn ;
 Til Custance made hir bold, and bad hir werche
 The wil of Crist, as doghter of his chirche. 63

The Constable wex abasshed of that syght,
 And seyde—“What amounteth al this fare ?”
 Custance answerde—“Sire, it is Cristes might
 That helpeth folk out of the feendes snare.”
 And so ferforth she gan our lay declare
 That she the Constable, ere that it were eve,
 Converted, and on Crist made him bileve. 70

This constable was no thing lord of this place
 Of which I speke, ther he Custance fond,
 But kepte it strongly, many wintres space,
 Under Alla, King of al Northumberlond,
 That was ful wys, and worthy of his hond
 Ageyn the Scottes, as men may wel here ;
 But turne I wol ageyn to my matere. 77

Sathan, that ever us waiteth to bigyle,
 Saugh of Custance al hir perfeccioun,
 And caste anon how he mighte quyte hir whyle ;
 And made a yong knyght, that dwelte in that toun,

Love hir so hote of foul affeccoun
 That verrailly him thoughte he shulde spille
 But he of hir mighte ones have his wille. 84

He woweth hir, but it availleth noght ;
 She wolde do no sinne, by no weye ;
 And, for despyt, he compassed in his thoght
 To maken hir on shamful deth to deye.
 He waiteth whan the Constable was aweye,
 And prively upon a night he crepte
 In Hermengildes chambre whyl she slepte. 91

Wery forwaked in hir orisouns
 Slepeth Custance, and Hermengild also.
 This knyght, thurgh Sathanas temptaciouns,
 Al softly is to the bed ygo,
 And kitte the throte of Hermengild atwo,
 And leyde the bloody knyf by dame Custance, 97
 And wente his weye—ther God yeve him meschaunce !

Sone after comth this constable hoom agayn,
 And eek Alla, that king was of that lond ;
 And saugh his wyf despitously yslayn,
 For which ful ofte he weep and wrong his hond ;
 And in the bed the bloody knyf he fond
 By dame Custance—allas ! what mighte she seye ?
 For verray wo hir wit was al aweye. 105

To King Alla was told al this meschaunce,
 And eek the tyme, and wher, and in what wyse
 That in a ship was founden dame Custance,
 As herbiforn that ye han herd devyse.
 The kinges herte of pitee gan agryse
 Whan he saugh so benigne a creature
 Falle in disese and in misaventure. 112

For as the lomb toward his deth is broght
 So stant this innocent bfore the king.
 This false knyght that hath this tresoun wrought
 Berth hir on hond that she hath doon this thing.
 But nathelees ther was gret murmuring
 Among the peple : they seyn they cannot gesse
 That she hath doon so gret a wikkednesse. 119

For they hau seyn hir ever so vertuous,
 And loving Hermengild ryght as hir lyf.
 Of this bar witnesse everich in that hous
 Save he that Hermengild slow with his knyf.
 This gentil king hath caught a gret motyf
 Of this witnesse, and thoghte he wolde enquere
 Depper in this, a trouthe for to lere. 126

Allas, Custance ! thou hast no champioun,
 Ne fyghte canstow nought, so weylawey !
 But He that starf for our redempcioun,
 And bond Sathan (and yit lyth ther he lay),
 So be thy stronge champioun this day !
 For, butif Crist open miracle kythe, 132
 Withouten gilt thou shalt be slayn as swythe . . .

Have ye nat seyn som tyme a pale face
 Among a prees, of him that hath be lad
 Toward his deeth, wheras him gat no grace,
 And swich a colour in his face hath had
 Men mighte knowe his face that was bistad
 Amonges alle the faces in that route ?
 So stant Custance, and loketh hir aboute. 140

O quenes livinge in prosperitee !
 Duchesses, and ladyes everichone !
 Haveth som routhe on hir adversitee :

An emperoures doghter stant allone ;
 She hath no wight to whom to make hir mone.
 O blood roial ! that stondest in this drede,
 Fer been thy frendes at thy grete nede ! 147

This Alla King hath swich compassioun,
 As gentil herte is fulfild of pitee,
 That from his yen ran the water down.
 "Now hastily do fecche a book," quod he,
 "And, if this knyght wol sweren how that she
 This womman slow, yet wole we us avyse
 Whom that we wole that shal ben our justyse." 154

A Briton book, writen with evangyles,
 Was fet, and on this book he swoor anoon
 She gilty was, and in the menewhyles
 A hand him smot upon the nekke boon
 That doun he fel atones as a stoon,
 And both his yen braste out of his face
 In sight of everybody in that place ! 161

A vois was herd in general audience
 And seyde—"Thou hast disclaundered giltelees
 The doghter of holy chirche in hey presence :
 Thus hastow doon, and yet holde I my pees."
 Of this mervaille agast was al the prees ;
 As mased folk they stoden everichone,
 For drede of wreche, save Custance allone. 168

Gret was the drede, and eek the repentance
 Of hem that hadden wrong suspeccioun
 Upon this sely innocent Custance ;
 And, for this miracle, in conclusioun,
 And by Custances mediacioun,

The king, and many another in that place,
 Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace. 175

This false knyght was slayn for his untrouthe
 By jugement of Alla hastily;
 And yet Custance hadde of his deth gret routhe.
 And after this Jesus, of his mercy,
 Made Alla wedden ful solempnely
 This holy mayden that is so bright and shene,
 And thus hath Crist ymaad Custance a queene. 182

Nothing, however, is so uncertain as human happiness. A repetition of her former woes was in store for Constance. It came about in this way: Shortly after the birth of her son, christened Maurice, the Constable despatched a messenger with the joyful news to King Alla, who was at the time on a hostile expedition in Scotland. Donegild, the king's mother, who had never approved of her son's marriage to Constance, stole the messenger's letters, and substituted a communication of her own, announcing the birth—not of a fair son and heir, but of a monster, upon whom no one could look without aversion. Alla, though grieved at the news, so far disappointed the expectations of Donegild that he wrote in reply to the Constable to keep with all care mother and child till his return. The letter was stolen, as the former had been, from the drunken messenger, and a forged document, put in its place by Donegild, ordered the Constable to get rid of both mother and child at once by committing them to the sea in the same boat in which Constance had first been conveyed to the coast of England. With a sad heart the Constable, within four days after receipt of the forged order, executed the supposed command of the king. It was only on Alla's return that the deceit of Donegild was discovered. She was put to death,

but her death did not restore to the king his beloved wife and child.

Constance and her child were borne meanwhile through many perils over the limitless sea. As chance or providence would have it, the ship in which she lay was carried by the waves through the straits of Morocco into the Mediterranean ; and here for years it drifted about, seemingly in hourly danger, but completely safe from hour to hour.

Meanwhile a punitive expedition had been sent by the Emperor of Rome against Syria ; and this expedition, after ample vengeance had been taken upon the Sultan's mother and the treacherous Moslems of her party, was returning to Italy, when the officer in command encountered the ship in which Constance had been so long a wanderer of the sea, and rescued her and her fair son from further danger. He brought them to Rome, and lodged them in his own house, neither knowing who they were, nor having that knowledge revealed to him by Constance.

Time passed, and at last King Alla came to Rome to do penance for the death of his mother. One day, at a banquet given to his Roman friends, Alla was struck by the appearance of the youth Maurice, who had come to the banquet with one of the guests, the officer and senator who had befriended Constance. The youth's likeness to his mother is the clue to the discovery of Constance, and an affecting meeting between husband and wife, and mutual explanations, soon take place. This event is followed by another, almost as interesting, the Emperor's recognition of Constance as his daughter.

Constance goes back to England with Alla, and lives there happily till Alla's death. She then returns to Rome, where in due time her son Maurice becomes emperor.

NOTES.

1. *into our occēan*. Out of the Mediterranean into the Atlantic.
4. *in Northumberlond*. The district of that name, stretching from the Humber (which is mentioned in Trivet's narrative) to the Firth of Forth. Yorkshire is probably meant.
6. *of al a tyde*. For a whole hour.
10. *this very womman ful of care*. Cf. Coleridge's *Christabel*—

“A weary woman, scarce alive”—

said of the Lady Geraldine.

28. This line recurs in Chaucer. It is said of Griselda in *The Clerk's Tale* (“ech hir lovede that loked on hir face” ; said of Troilus near the end of Book I.) Similar lines are—

“Paradys stood formèd in her yën.”

—*Troilus and Cressida*, v. 817.

“It was an heven upon him for to see.”

—*Ibid.*, ii. 637.

Cf. Dryden (*Absalom and Achitophel*)—

“And Paradise was opened in his face” ;

also Scott's *Old Mortality* (Cuddie Headrig *lory*) : “His face was like a fiddle, for a' body that looked upon him liked him.”

42. *for the mene whyle*. The time is the middle of the sixth century. Alla was the Saxon king of Northumbria from 560 to 567 A.D.

64. *wex abasshed of*. Was or became confounded at.

75. *worthy of his hond* (*Ageyn the Scottes*). Distinguished for his valour against the Scots.

80. *quyte hir whyle*. Pay her for it (lit., requite her while—i.e., time or trouble). Cf. “worth one's while.”

89. *waiteth*. Watches. Cf. “Christmas waits” (watchmen, night musicians) ; “to lie in wait” (on watch).

105. *wo*. That is, at the crime ; horror. The *wo* is not for herself.

112. *disce*. Distress, trouble.

116. To bear on hand—to accuse falsely ; to maintain (the idea of deception being sometimes, as here, implied). The expression recurs both in Chaucer and in Shakespeare. In “berth hir on hond that she hath doon this thing,” *hir* is dative case—against her.

118. *gesse*. Imagine.

124, 125. *caught a gret motyf Of this witnesse.* Entertained a strong suspicion of the evidence against Constance.

130. The parenthesis means "who still lies bound," and the reference is to one of the Apocryphal Gospels.

134-140. This whole stanza has been greatly admired by all critics. *Wheras him gat no grace* refers back to *preys*; and at l. 138 *his* (= of him) is the antecedent of the relative.

141. Apostrophe is a favourite figure with Chaucer.

149. A variant of the sentiment so common in Chaucer—"Pite renneth sone in gentil herte."

153. *us aryse.* Consider with ourselves. The king almost hints that even then his suspicion will by no means be removed. Read—We will consider after that (whom to appoint as judge).

155. *writen with ewangyles.* Containing the Gospels (in Welsh).

V. FROM THE SHIPMAN'S TALE.

[The description given here of a merchant in his office should be studied comparatively with the portrait of the Merchant presented in the Prologue.]

THIS marchant up aryseth,
And on his nedes sadly him avyseth,
The Merchant in his Counting- And up into his countour house goth he
room. To rekene with himself, as wel may be,
Of thilke yeer, how that it with him stood,
And how that he despended hadde his good,
And if that he encreessed were or noon :
His bokes and his bagges, many oon,
He leith biforn him on his counting bord ;
Ful riche was his tresor and his hord,— 10
For which ful faste his countour dore he shette,
And eek he nolde that no man sholde him lette
Of his accountes for the mene tyme.
And thus he sit til it was passed pryme. . . .

Whan that men mosten dyne, and that anon,
Up to hir housbonde is this wyf ygon,
And knokketh at his countour boldely.
“*Qui tu ?*” quod he. “Peter ! it am I,”
Quod she ; “what, sir, how longe wol ye faste ?
How longe tyme wol ye rekene and caste
Your sommes, and your bokes, and your thinges ?

Avoy on alle swiche rekeninges !
Ye have ynough, pardee, of Goddes sonde :
Com down today, and lat your bagges stonde.
What ! lat us here a messe, and go we dyne."

"Wyf," quod this man, "litel canstow devyne
The curious bisnesse that we have ;
For of us chapmen, al so God me save !
And by that lord that cleped is Seint Yve !
Searsly amonges twelve ten shul thryve 30
Continuelly, lastinge unto our age.
We may wel make chere and good visage,
And dryve forth the world as it may be,
And kepen our estaat in privetee
Til we be deed, or elles that we pleye
A pilgrimage, or goon out of the weye.
And therfor have I greet necessitee
Upon this queinte world tavyse me,
For evermore we mote stonde in drede
Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhede." 40

VI. THE prioress's tale.

WHEN the Shipman had finished his story, the Host expressed himself as well satisfied with it. The ball was now well set rolling; but it was necessary to keep it going. Accordingly he began to look about at once among the company for another story-teller.

“ ‘Passe over, (quod he) and lat us seke aboute
Who shal now telle first of al this route
Another tale?’ And with that word he sayde,
As curteisly as it had been a mayde,—
‘My Lady Prioress, by your leve,
So that I wiste I sholde you nat greve,
I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde.
Now wol ye vouchesauf, my lady dere?’
‘Gladly,’ quod she; and seyde as ye shal here.”

This tale has a child for its hero, and it is appropriately told by the Lady Prioress, whose gentle manners have won the hearts of all the Pilgrims, making even the rough and ready Host of the Tabard address her “as courteously as it had been a maid.” She agrees willingly to tell a story in honour of the “white lily flower” she serves—the Virgin Mary. Her tale accordingly is of a miracle wrought by that “blissful Queen” to the confusion of the Jews. (It should not, in fairness to the Jews, be forgotten, that in the middle ages they were frequently the victims of much unjust prejudice and oppression.) Here is an outline of the story.

The scene is laid in a great city of Asia, where was a street inhabited by Jews. Their presence there was licensed by a lord of that country; their business was to lend money. But the

street was a common thoroughfare, and anybody might pass through. Indeed, many Christian children did so daily, for their school was at the farther end of it: there they were taught to sing and to read. Among these school-children was a widow's son, a little boy seven years of age, who was a very pious child: he never forgot to kneel down, wherever there was an image of the Virgin, and repeat his *Ave Maria*. One day, sitting in school learning his lesson, he heard a beautiful hymn sung by some of the other scholars; he drew nearer and nearer, listening to both words and music, till he had got the first verse by heart:—

“Alma Redemptoris mater,
Quam de cœlis misit Pater
Propter salutem gentium!
Tibi dicunt omnes *Ave!*
Quia mundum solvens a vœ
Mutasti vocem flentium.”

But he could not understand its Latin words, and begged one of his elder companions to translate them to him. The other was unable himself to give a translation, but told the little fellow that the song was in praise of the Virgin Mary. Then the widow's son made the resolution to learn it before Christmas, even though he should be scolded for his primer and punished for neglect of lessons; and he prevailed upon his school fellow to teach it to him on their way home every day, until he could sing it all. And then he was never done singing *O alma Redemptoris*, for the sweetness of the hymn had pierced his heart.

But as he passed, singing his beloved hymn, both at morn and evening, through the street of the Jews, they grew angry at him and his singing; and their anger and hatred became so fierce that they hired a ruffian to murder this innocent and to throw his little body into a pit: which was done, and thus the Jews thought they were rid of his song.

The poor widow sat up all night waiting for her little son. When he had not come home by morning, she went seeking him at school, and through all the streets. She discovered that he had last been seen in the Jews' street; and thither she hastened, begging every Jew she met to tell her if he had seen her child.

But every one said nay. All the time she was offering up prayers to the Virgin for aid ; and lo ! as she came near the pit where her son's body lay, the dead child began to sing *Gloria Redemptoris* as loud and clear as he had done when alive ! Then was there great consternation among the Jews : they were at once proved guilty, and put to cruel and shameful deaths.

But the child, though brought up out of the pit, and carried in solemn procession to the next abbey, did not cease singing his song ; neither was holy water of any avail to give him peace. The abbot conjured him to tell the reason ; and the child told him that the Virgin had come to him, and laid a grain upon his tongue, promising to come and fetch him when the grain was taken away. When the abbot took it away, the child "gave up the ghost full softly" ; and the worthy abbot and his monks fell weeping on the pavement, and lay there praising the Mother of Christ. Thereafter they rose, and buried this boy-martyr, enclosing his "little body sweet" in a tomb of fair marble : but as for his spirit—"where he is now, God grant us all to meet !"

Such was the affecting story told by the fair Prioress on the way to Canterbury ; and we do not wonder at its effect on the company,—

"When said was all this miracle, every one
As sober was, that wonder was to see."

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,

| | |
|--|--|
| Story of the little Chorister whom the Jews murdered. | Amonges Cristen folk a Jewerie, Sustened by a lord of that contree For foule usure and lucre of vilanye, Hateful to Crist and to his companye ; And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or wende, For it was free, and open at either ende. |
|--|--|

7

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood

Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were

Children an heap, ycome of Cristen blood,
That lerned in that scole yeer by yere
Swich maner doctrine as men used there,—
This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
As smale children doon in hir childhede. 14

Among thise children was a widwe's sone,
A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone ;
And eek also, wheras he saugh the image
Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye
His *Ave Marie* as he goth by the weye. 21

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone ytaught
Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,
To worship ay ; and he forgat it naught ;
For sely child wol alwey sone lere.
But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist did reverence. 28

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
As he sat in the scole at his primer,
He *Alma Redemptoris* herde singe
As children lerned hir antiphoner,
And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and ner
And herkned ay the wordes and the note,
Til he the firste vers coude al by rote. 35

Noght wiste what this Latin was to seye,
For he so yong and tendre was of age ;
But on a day his felaw gan he preye

Texpounden him this song in his langage
 Or telle him why this song was in usage :
 This preycle he him to construe and declare
 Ful often time upon his knowes bare. 42

His felaw, which that elder was than he,
 Answerde him thus—"This song I have herd seye,
 Was makend of our blisful Lady free
 Hir to salve and eek hir for to preye
 To been our help and socour whan we deye.
 I can no more expounde in this matere ;
 I lerne song, I can but smal grammere." 49

"And is this song makend in reverence
 Of Cristes moder?" seyde this innocent.
 Now, certes, I wol do my diligence
 To conne it al er Cristemasse is went.
 Though that I for my primer shal be shent,
 And shal be beten thries in an houre,
 I wol it conne Our Lady to honoure." 56

His felaw taughte him homward prively
 Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote ;
 And than he song it wel and boldely,
 Fro word to word according with the note.
 Twies a day it passed thurgh his throte,
 To scoleward and homward whan he wente ;
 On Cristes moder set was his entente. 63

As I have seyde, thurghout the Jewerie
 This litel child, as he cam to and fro,
 Ful merily than wolde he singe and crye
O alma redemptoris evermo.
 The swetnes hath his herte perced so

Of Cristes moder that, to hir to preye,
He can not stinte of singing by the weye. . . . 70

Fro thennes forth the Jewes han conspired
This innocent out of this world to chace.
An homicyde therto han they hired,
That in an aleye hadde a privee place.
And, as the childe gan forby to pace,
This cursed Jew him hente, and heeld him faste,
And kitte his throte, and in a pit him caste. . . . 77

This poore widwe waiteth al that night
After hir litel child, but he cam noght ;
For which, as sone as it was dayes light,
With face pale of drede and bisy thoght
She hath at scole and elleswher him soght ;
Til finally she gan so fer espye
That he last seyn was in the Jewerye. 84

With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed
She goth, as she were half out of hir minde,
To every place wher she hath supposed
By liklihede hir litel child to finde.
And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
She cryde ; and atte laste thus she wroghte
Among the cursed Jewes she him soghte. 91

She frayneth and she preyeth pitously
To every Jew that dwelte in thilke place
To telle hir if hir child wente oght forby ;
They sayde "Nay." But Jesu of his grace
Yaf in hir thought, withinne a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone she cryde,
Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde. 98

O grete God, that parfournest thy laude
 By mouth of innocents, lo, heer thy might!
 This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
 And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
 Ther he with throte ycorven lay upright
 He *Alma redemptoris* gan to singe
 So loude that al the place gan to ringe. 105

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,
 In comen for to wondre upon this thing;
 And hastily they for the provost sente:
 He cam anon withouten taryng,
 And herieth Crist, that is of heven king,
 And eek his moder, honour of mankinde;
 And after that the Jewes leet he binde. 112

This child with pitous lamentacioun
 Uptaken was, singing his song alway,
 And with honour of greet processioun
 They carien him unto the nexte abbay.
 His moder swowning by the bere lay:
 Unnethe might the peple that was there
 This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere. . . . 119

The covent eek lay on the pavement
 Wepinge, and herien Cristes moder dere;
 And after that they ryse, and forth ben wente,
 And toke away this martir fro his bere,
 And in a tombe of marbul stones clere
 Enclosen they his litel body swete.
 Ther he is now God leve us for to mete. . . . 126

With torment and with shamful deth echon
 This provost doth thise Jewes for to sterve

That of this mordre wiste, and that anon :

He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.

Yvel shal have that yvel wol deserve.

Therfor with wilde hors he dide hem drawe,

And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

133

NOTES.

4. *foule usure*. Forbidden by the Mosaic law, and by the Church in medieval times. It was practised by the Jews, and their exorbitant rate of interest made them specially detested. See *Merchant of Venice*, I. iii.

7. *it was free*, &c. It was a thoroughfare.

17. *That . . . was his wone*. Whose custom was to go.

21. *Ave Marie*. In full—"Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum! Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui! Amen."

27. *Seint Nicholas*. The patron saint of children, especially of good scholars. Santa Claus is a corruption of the name.

31. *Alma Redemptoris*. Several Latin hymns begin with these words. A stanza from one of them goes thus:—

"Alma Redemptoris mater,
Quam de cœlis misit Pater
Propter salutem gentium!
Tibi dicunt omnes *Ave!*
Quia mundum solvens a vœ
Mutasti vocem flentium."

119. *newe Rachel*. The reference is to the text in Matt. ii. 18: "Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."

130. *no swich cursednesse observe*. Tolerate no such wicked crime. "Observe" has sometimes in Chaucer the meaning of "favour."

131. *Yvel shal have*, &c. Cf. "Honi soit qui mal y pense."

VII. THE MONK'S TALE.

AFTER the Poet himself had told in prose the tale of Melibeus and his Wife Prudence, the Host singled out the Monk for the next tale. Apparently he expected from him an entertainment for the company of a quite different character from the series of seventeen short tragic stories, mostly from real life, to which, after a brief dissertation on the nature of tragedy, the Monk invited the attention of his fellow pilgrims. He would have extended his doleful narratives of the downfall of the great—for his memory was stored with a hundred such narratives, and he showed no sign of ceasing—when the Knight, losing all patience at the sorrowful recital, called upon him to stop, and the Host demanded something of a more cheerful character, such as a hunting story. But the Monk refused, offended at being interrupted. He was in no mood to tell funny stories, he said; what he had given them could stand for his contribution to the general entertainment—he had kept his promise; and now let Harry Bailly call upon somebody else—which Harry Bailly at once did.

There is no doubt at all that most of the short tragic stories told in sequence by the Monk were written before the scheme of the Canterbury Pilgrimage occurred to Chaucer. He adapted them for that scheme, and, if we may judge by the maturer style which marks his later work, wrote at least an additional four for the scheme, taking his subjects for these from modern or contemporaneous history. Of these four the one selected for this volume is the pathetic story of Ugolino of Pisa, whose terrible fate in the Hunger Tower, as the scene of his sufferings (the Tower of Gualandi) was afterwards called, was an actual incident of the year 1288-89. Chaucer (through the Monk) refers us to Dante for the original of this tragedy (Canto xxxiii. of the *Inferno*).

Lydgate's *Falls of Princes* (= *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*) was doubtless suggested to him by *The Monk's Tale*. Thomas Sackville's (Lord Buckhurst's) *Mirror for Magistrates* is a work of a similar kind.

The measure employed in *The Monk's Tale* is an eight-lined stanza of iambic pentameters, 8 (5*xx*), with the rimes falling *ababbcb*. It was in use by the French poets, from whom Chaucer derived it.

The seventeen tragic instances which point the moral of *The Monk's Tale*—

“Lat no man truste on blind prosperitee ;
Be war by thise ensamples trewe and olde”—

are Lucifer, Adam, Samson, Hercules, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Zenobia, Pedro of Spain, Pedro of Cyprus, Barnabo of Lombardy, Ugolino of Pisa, Nero, Holofernes, Antiochus, Alexander, Julius Cæsar, and Cræsus.

OF the Erl Hugelyn of Pyse the langour

Ther may no tonge telle for pitee.

The

Tragedy of

Count

Hugo and

his Three

Sons.

But litel out of Pyse stant a tour,

In whiche tour in prisoun put was he ;

And with him been his litel children three.

The eldeste scarsly fyf yeer was of age.

Allas, Fortune ! it was greet crueltee

Swiche briddes for to putte in swiche a cage.

8

Dampned was he to deye in that prisoun ;

For Roger, which that bisshop was of Pyse,

Hadde on him maad a fals suggestioun,

Thurgh which the peple gan upon him ryse

And putten him to prisoun in swich wyse

As ye han herd ; and mete and drink he hadde

So smal that wel unnethe it may suffyse,

And therwithal it was ful povre and badde.

16

And on a day bifil that, in that hour

Whan that his mete wont was to be broght,
The gayler shette the dores of the tour.

He herde it wel, but he spak right noght ;
And in his herte anon ther fil a thoght
That they for hunger wolde doon him dyen.

“Allas !” quod he, “allas that I was wroght !”
Therwith the teres fillen from his yen. 24

His yonge sone, that three yeer was of age,

Unto him seyde—“Fader, why do ye wepe ?
Whan wol the gayler bringen our potage ?

Is ther no morsel breed that ye do kepe ?
I am so hungry that I may not slepe.

Now wolde God that I mighte slepen ever !

Than sholde not hunger in my wombe crepe.
Ther is no thing save breed that me were lever.” 32

Thus day by day this child bigan to crye,

Til in his fadres barme adoun it lay
And seyde—“Farwel, fader ! I moot dye,”
And kiste his fader, and deyde the same day.

And, whan the woful fader deed it sey,
For wo his armes two he gan to byte,
And seyde—“Allas, Fortune ! and weylaway !
Thy false wheel my wo al may I wyte.” 40

His children wende that it for hunger was

That he his armes gnaw, and not for wo,
And seyde—“Fader, do not so, allas !

But rather eet the flesh upon us two :
Our flesh thou yaf us, tak our flesh us fro
And eet ynough.” Right thus they to him seyde ;

And after that, within a day or so,
They leyde hem in his lappe adoun, and deyde. 48

Himself, despeired, eek for hunger starf.

Thus ended is this mighty Erl of Pyse ;
From heigh estaat Fortune away him carf.

Of this tragedie it oghte ynough suffyse.

Whoso wol here it in a lenger wyse,
Redeth the grete poete of Itaille

That highte Dant, for he can al devyse
Fro point to point,—not o word wol he faille. 56

NOTES.

1. Scan—

Of th' Erl | Hug'lyn | of Pys | e the | langour.

Pisa is about fifty miles west of Florence, and is famous for (among other things) its Leaning Tower, a campanile 180 feet high. It is the tragedy of Count Ugolino della Gherardesca's death that Chaucer deals with: the story of his ambition, his treachery and cruelty, is kept out of sight. The tragedy belongs to the thirteenth century. Dante's account of the tragic occurrence in the *Inferno* is well known: he too veils the treachery of Count Ugolino.

3. *stant a tour*. Standeth a tower, the tower of Gualandi.

5. *litel children three*. Dante gives four as the number of his sons imprisoned with him: History mentions two sons and two grandsons as his fellow-victims of starvation.

10. *Roger*. Ruggieri degli Ubaldini, archbp.

22. *doon him dyen*. Cause him to die. See, *supra*, the Prioress's Tale of the little clergeon, l. 128.

28-32. These pathetic lines are entirely Chaucer's.

40. That is, "I may altogether blame thy false wheel for my wo."

55. *Dant*. Dante, 1265-1321. Chaucer's first mention of him is in *The Hous of Fame*.

VIII. THE TALE OF THE NUN'S PRIEST.

THE Prologue informs us that there were two Nuns among the Pilgrims going to Canterbury, one of whom was the Lady Prioress and the other her chaplain, and that they were attended by three Priests. It is one of these Priests that tells the story of the Cock and the Fox. The tale is in Chaucer's best style, bright with glances of sly humour, and vivid as a picture, or rather as life and nature themselves, with firm quiet touches of rural scenery and rustic character. It is a good specimen of the better class of the *fabliau*, or humorous tale of ordinary life. Dryden has a version of it in his *Fables*.

A povre widwe, somdel stopen in age,

The Cock Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage

and the Bisyde a grove standing in a dale.

Fox—a

fabliau. This widwe of which I telle yow my tale,

Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,

In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,

For litel was hir catel and hir rente.

By housbondrye of such as God hir sente

She fond hirself, and eek hir doghtren two.

Three large sowes hadde she, and namo,

10

Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte Malle.

Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,

In which she eet ful many a splendre meel.

Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.

No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte :

Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.

Repleccioun ne made hir never syk :
 Attempre dyete was al her phisyk,
 And exerceye, and hertes suffisaunce. *hick place*
 The goutte lette hir nothing for to daunce, 20
 Napoplexye shente nat hir heed ;
 No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed :
 Hir bord was served most with whyt and black—
 Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lack,
 Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye,
 For she was as it were a maner deye.

A yerd she hadde enclosed al aboute
 With stikkes, and a drye dich withoute,
 In which she hadde a cok, highte Chauntecleer,
 In al the land of crowing nas his peer. 30
 His vois was merier than the mery orgon,
 On masse dayes that in the chirche gon ;
 Wel sikerer was his crowing in his logge
 Than is a klokke, or an abbey orlogge. . . .
 His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
 And batailled as it were a castel wal.
 His bile was blak, and as the jeet it shon ;
 Lyk asur were his legges and his ton,
 His nayles whyter than the lilye flour,
 And lyk the burnist gold was his colour. 40
 This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
 Sevene hennes, for his care and his plesaunce,
 Of which the fairest hewed on hir throte
 Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.
 Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
 And compainable, and bar herself ful faire. . . .
 But such a joye was it to here hem singe,
 Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,
 In swete accord "My Lief is faren on Londe"!

For thilke tyme, as I have understonde, 50
Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.

And so bifel that in a daweninge,
As Chauntecleer among his hennes alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte
As man that in his dreem is dreeched sore.
And, whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore,
She was agast, and seyde — “O herte dere,
What eyleth yow to grone in this manere? 60
Ye ben a verray sleper, fy for shame!”
And he answerde and sayde thus—“Madame,
I pray yow that ye take it nat agrief:
Pardee, me mette I was in such meschief!
Me mette withinne our yerde I saugh a beste
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste
Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed,
And tipped was his tail and bothe his eres
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres; 70
His snowte smal, with glowing eyen tweye.
Yet of his look for fere almost I deye,—
This caused me my groning doutelees.”

“Avoy!” quod she; “fy on yow, hertelees!
Allas!” quod she, “for, by that heven above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love.
I cannat love a coward, by my feith.
For, certes; whatso any womman seith,
We alle desiren, if it mighte be,
To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free, 80
And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,

Ne noon avauntour, by that heven above !
 How dorste ye seyn, for shame, unto your love
 That anything mighte make yow aferd ?
 Han ye no mannes herte, and han a berd ?
 Allas ! and konne ye been agast of swevenis ?
 Nothing, God wot, but vanitee in sweven is.
 Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,
 And ofte of fume and of complecciouns, 90
 Whan humours been to abundant in a wight.
 Certes, this dreem, which ye han met tonight,
 Comth of the grete superfluitee
 Of youre reede colera, pardee,
 Which causeth folk to dreden in hir dremes
 Of arwes, and of fyr with reede lemes,
 Of conteks, and of whelpes grete and lyte,
 And grete bestes whiche that wol hem byte. . . .
 For Goddes love, as tak some laxatyf :
 Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf, 100
 My reed is good ; and, for ye shul nat tarie,
 Thogh in this toun is noon apotecarie,
 I shal myself to herbes techen yow
 That shul been for your hele and for your prow. . . .
 Dredeth no dreem : I can say yow namore."

"Madame," quod he, "graunt mercy of your lore !
 But natheless, as in conclusioun,
 I yet shal han of this avisioun
 Adversitee. And I seye forthermore
 That I ne telle of laxatyves no store, 110
 For they been venimous, I wot it wel.
 I hem defye, I love hem never a del.

Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte al this.
 Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
 Of o thing God hath sent me large grace ;

For, whan I see the beautee of your face,
 Ye been so scarlet reed about your yen,
 It maketh al my drede for to dyen ;
 For, al so siker as '*In principio*
Mulier est hominis confusio'— 120

Madame, the sentence of this Latin is
 'Womman is mannes joye and al his blis'—
 Thanne I defye bothe sweven and dreem !"
 And with that word he fleigh down fro the beem,
 For it was day, and eek his hennes alle ;
 And with a chukke he gan hem for to calle,
 For he had founde a corn lay in the yerd.
 Real he was, he was namore aferd.
 He loketh as it were a grim leoun ;
 And on his toon he rometh up and down ; 130
 Him deynd nat to sette his foot to grounde ;
 He chukketh whan he hath a corn yfounde,
 And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
 Thus real as a prince is in his halle,
 Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture,
 And after wol I telle his aventure.

Whan that the moneth in which the world bigan,
 That highte March, whan God first maked man,
 Was complet, and ypassed were also,
 Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two, 140
 Bifel that Chauntecleer in al his pryde,
 His seven wyves walking by his syde,
 Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne
 That in the signe of Taurus hadde yronne
 Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat more ;
 And knew by kynde, and by noon other lore,
 That it was pryme, and crew with blisful stevene.
 "The sonne," he sayde, "is clomben up on hevene

Fourty degrees and oon, and more, ywis.
 Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis, 150
 Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they singe,
 And seeth the fresshe floures how they springe!
 Ful is myn herte of revel and solas."
 But sodeinly him fel a sorweful cas;
 For ever the latter ende of joye is wo,—
 God wot, al worldly joye is sone ago.

A col fox, ful of sleigh iniquitee,
 That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,
 By heigh imaginacioun forncast,
 The same night thurghout the hegges brast 160
 Into the yerd ther Chauntecleer the faire
 Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;
 And in a bed of wortes stille he lay
 Til it was passed undern of the day.

Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
 Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,
 Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
 Song merier than the mermayde in the see. . . .
 And so bifel that, as he caste his ye
 Among the wortes on a boterflye, 170
 He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.
 Nothing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,
 But cryde anon *cok cok*! and up he sterte,
 As man that was affrayed in his herte, . . .
 And wolde han fled but that the fox anon
 Seyde—"Gentil sire, alas! wher wol ye gon?
 Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend?
 Now, certes, I were worse than a feend
 If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.
 I am nat come your counseil for taspie, 180

But, trewely, the cause of my cominge
 Was only for to herkne how that ye singe;
 For trewely ye have as mery a stevene
 As eny aungel hath that is in hevene. . . .
 My lord your fader (God his soule blesse!),
 And eek your moder, of hir gentillesse,
 Han in myn hous ybeen, to my gret ese;
 And, certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
 But, for men speke of singing, I wol seye,
 So mote I brouke wel myn eyen tweye, 190
 Save yow I herde never man so singe
 As dide your fader in the morweninge.
 Certes, it was of herte al that he song.
 And, for to make his vois the more strong,
 He wolde so peyne him that with bothe his yen
 He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
 And stonden on his tiptoon therwithal,
 And strecche forth his nekke long and smal. . .
 Lat see conne ye your fader countrefete?"

This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete 200
 As man that couthe his tresoun nat espye,
 So was he ravissht with his flaterye. . . .
 This Chauntecleer stood hye upon his toos,
 Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos
 And gan to crowe loude for the nones;
 And Daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
 And by the garget hente Chauntecleer,
 And on his bak toward the wode him beer.

Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun
 Was never maad at falle of Ilioun, 210
 As seith us Vergil in Eneydos,
 As maden alle the hennes in the clos,

Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte ;
But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighthe.

This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres two
Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo,
And out at dores sterten they anoon,
And seyen the fox toward the grove goon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away :
They cryden—"Out ! harrow ! and weylaway ! 220
Ha ! ha ! the fox !" And after him they ran,
And eek with staves many another man ;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,
And Malkin with a distaf in her hand ;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges—
So were they fered for barking of the dogges
And shouting of the men and wimmen eke :
They ronne so hem thoughte hir herte breke ;
They yelleden as feendes doon in helle ;
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle ; 230
The gees for fere flowen over the trees ;
Out of the hyves cam the swarm of bees ;
So hidous was the noyse, a ! ben'cite !
Certes, he Jakke Straw and his menyee
Ne maden never shoutes half so shrille
Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras they brougten bemes, and of box,
Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,
And therwithal they shryked and they houped : 240
It semed as that heven sholde falle.

Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle.
Lo, how Fortune turneth sodeinly
The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy !

This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
 In al his drede unto the fox he spak
 And seyde—"Sire, if that I were as ye,
 Yet sholde I seyn (as wis God helpe me!)—
 'Turneth ageyn, ye proude cherles alle!
 A verray pestilence upon yow falle! 250
 Now am I come unto this wodes syde,
 Maugre your heed, the cok shal heer abyde:
 I wol him ete in feith, and that anon.'"

The fox answerde—"In feith, it shal be don!"
 And, as he spak that word, al sodeinly
 This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,
 And heigh upon a tree he fleigh anon.
 And, whan the fox saugh that he was ygon,
 "Allas!" quod he, "O Chauntecleer, alas!
 I have to yow," quod he, "ydon trespas, 260
 In as moche as I maked yow aferd
 Whan I yow hente and broughte out of the yerd;
 But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente:
 Com down, and I shal telle yow what I mente.
 I shal seye sooth to yow, God help me so!"

"Nay than," quod he, "I shrewe us bothe two,
 And first I shrewe myself, bothe blood and bones,
 If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
 Thou shalt namore thurgh thy flaterye
 Do me to singe and winke with myn ye; 270
 For he that winketh, whan he sholde see,
 Al wilfully—God lat him never thee!"

"Nay," quod the fox, "but God yeve him meschaunce,
 That is so undiscret of governaunce
 That jangleth whan he sholde holde his pees!"

WHILOM two felawes wente
 On pilgrimage in a ful good entente ;
 And happed so they come into a toun
 Wheras ther was swich congregacioun
 Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage,
 That they ne founde as much as o cotage 281
 In which they bothe mighte ylogged be.
 Wherfor they mosten of necessitee,
 As for that night, departen compaignye ;
 And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
 And took his logging as it wolde falle.
 That oon of hem was logged in a stalle
 Fer in a yerd with oxen of the plough ;
 That other man was logged wel ynough,
 As was his aventure or his fortune, 290
 That us governeth alle as in commune.

And so bifel that, long er it were day,
 This man mette in his bed, theras he lay,
 How that his felawe gan upon him calle
 And sayde—"Allas ! for in an oxes stalle
 This night I shal be mordred ther I lye !
 Now help me, dere brother, or I dye ;
 In alle haste com to me," he sayde.
 This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde ;
 But, whan that he was wakned of his sleep, 300
 He turned him, and took of this no keep :
 Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee
 Thus twies in his sleeping dremed he.
 And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
 Cam, as him thoughte, and sayde—"I am now slawe ;
 Biholde my bloody woundes, deepe and wyde !
 Aris up erly in the morwetide,
 And at the west gate of the toun," quod he,

"A carte ful of donge ther shaltow see,
 In which my body is hid ful prively : 310
 Do thilke carte arresten boldely.
 My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn"—
 And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,
 With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
 And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe ;
 For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
 To his felawes in he took the way ;
 And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
 After his felawe he bigan to calle.
 The hostiler answered him anon 320
 And sayde—"Sire, your felawe is agon ;
 As sone as day he wente out of the toun."

This man gan fallen in suspeciou
 Remembring on his dremes that he mette ;
 And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,
 Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
 A dong-cart, as it wente to donge lond,
 That was arrayed in that same wise
 As ye han herd the dede man devise ;
 And with an hardy herte he gan to crye 330
 Vengeance and justice of this felonye :
 "My felawe mordred is this same night,
 And in this carte he lith gapinge upright.
 I crye out on the ministres," quod he,
 "That sholden kepe and reulen this citee ;
 Harrow ! allas ! here lith my felawe slayn !"

What sholde I more unto this tale sayn ?
 The peple outsterte, and caste the cart to ground,
 And in the middel of the dong they founde
 The dede man, that mordred was al newe ! 340

O blisful God, that art so just and trewe !
 Lo, how that thou biwreyest mordre alway !
 Mordre wol out ; that see we day by day.
 Mordre is so wlatson and abhominable
 To God, that is so just and resonable
 That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be.
 Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
 Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.

And right anon ministres of that toun
 Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned, 350
 And eek the hostiler so sore engyned,
 That they biknewe hir wikkednesse anoon,
 And were anhangd by the nekke boon.

NOTES.

1. *stopen in age*. Advanced in age ; *not* stooped. The verb is *steppen*, to step.

7. *catel and rente*. Possessions (chattels) and income.

11. *a sheep that highte Malle*. It may be worth noticing that this was also the name of Burns's "pet yowe" (ewe) ; see his elegy on the *Death of Poor Mailie* (Molly). The names of animals on farms are traditional : they never change. The Norfolkshire Reeve was mounted on a gray cob (see Prol.) with the name of Scot ; and Scot is still, we are told, a common name for a horse on Norfolkshire farms.

12. *bour . . . halle*. Private and public room ; in Scot. "but and ben" (order reversed).

14. A contrast to the Franklin's fare (see Prologue).

19. *hertes suffisaunce*. Contentment.

26. *a maner deye*. A kind of dairy-woman.

35-40. Notice the brilliant colouring of this description.

36. *batailled*. Embattled ; indented ; with alternate merlon and embrasure. .

49. "*My Lief is faren on Londe*." Probably a line of a popular song of the time. It means, my love is gone away.

54. *the halle*. The public room of the cottage, in which the poultry were allowed to roost by night.

74. *hertlees!* Timid one! Coward would not be too strong: she uses it four lines below.

82. *tool*. Weapon.

89-91. See note on l. 123 below.

107. *as in conclusion*. My last word on the subject. (See l. 113, below.) *Not*—in the end; at last. He did not want the event: he only wanted to maintain his opinion!

110. *I ne telle of laxatyres no store*. I count them of no value; I set no store by them.

119, 120. The humour lies in his display of scholarship: of course, he presumed her ignorance of Latin in the complimentary translation.

123. *bothe sweren and dreem*. Cf. the second part of *The Squire's Tale* (ll. 11-13) in Chaucer's complete Works. There we read that fumes or vapours arising from the stomach of one who has been indulging in wine (or gluttony) produce a class of dream which is of no significance whatever. "Clear dream or solemn vision," to use Milton's expression, is very different from the effects of intemperance on the brain in sleep.

121. *fleigh*. Flew. So *seigh* for *saw*. The *gh* is preserved in the nouns—flight, sight.

137-149. Prime (l. 147) means the first quarter of the artificial day, and may mean any hour between 6 and 9 A.M. The artificial day is the period from sunrise to sunset: the natural day is the whole twenty-four hours. In the passage here dealt with (as Prof. Skeat remarks) "the day meant is certainly May 3, because the sun had passed the 21st degree of Taurus. . . . It is playfully denoted by saying that March was complete, and also (since March began) thirty-two days more had passed. The words 'since March began' are parenthetical, and we are, in fact, told that the whole of March, the whole of April, and two days of May were done with. March was then considered the first month of the year, though the year began with the 25th, not the 1st; and Chaucer alludes to the idea that the Creation itself took place in March. The day, then, was May 3, with the sun past 21 degrees of Taurus. The hour must be had from the sun's altitude, rightly said to be 'Fourty degrees and oon' (l. 149). I use a globe, and find that the sun would attain alt. 41° nearly at 9 o'clock [15° of the equinoctial are equivalent to one hour]. It follows that prime here means the end of the first quarter of the artificial day." The sun entered the zodiacal sign of Aries (the Ram) about the middle of March (to speak roughly), Taurus (the Bull) about the middle of April. See note to line 8 of The Prologue to *The Tales*.

151, 152. Than these no two lines in the whole range of poetry better bring to the imagination the fresh beauty of a May morning.

156. *al worldly joye is sone ago.* Cf. Dunbar's—

“All erdly joy returnis in pane.”

[William Dunbar, Scotland's greatest poet before Burns, was an ardent student of Chaucer; he lived about a century later than the English poet.]

157. *A col fox.* Morris explains “A treacherous fox,” citing “col prophet,” a false prophet; and “col kuife,” a treacherous knife. Skeat explains it “A fox with coal-black marks” (see l. 70, *supra*).

159. Following out a great premeditated idea.

179. *wolde.* Intended.

180. *counseil.* Secrets.

190. *brouke myn cyen tweye.* Have the use of my two eyes. To use, to enjoy, is the original sense of the Old Eng. word *brūcan*, cognate with Lat. *fruct-us*. The later meaning of “brook” is to endure or put up with. Keats (*Eve of St Agnes*) makes a peculiar use of the word—“He scarce could brook Tears at the thought”; where it seems to mean “refrain from.”

206. *Daun Russel.* So called from his red colour. Daun, or Dan (fr. Lat. *dominus*), is lord.

234. *Jakke Straw and his menyec.* The reference is to the Peasant's Revolt in the early part of Richard II.'s reign. The leaders were Wat Tyler, John Ball, and Jack Straw. Jack Straw, a priest, led the Essex men in the great rising of 1381. Gower's *Vox Clamantis* will help any student interested in the social history of those unhappy times to realise the peril in which England was then placed, but which seems to have affected Chaucer but slightly.

IX. FROM THE PHYSICIAN'S TALE.

THIS is the story of Virginia, "the fairest maid in Rome," slain by her father to save her from the lust of Appius Claudius. It is the subject of one of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*. The date of the incident which the story records is the fifth century B.C.

THER was, as telleth Titus Livius,
A knyght, that called was Virginius,
Portrait of Fulfuld of honour and of worthinesse,
Virginia. And strong of frendes and of greet richesse.

This knyght a doghter hadde by his wyf
And never ne hadde mo in al his lyf.
Fair was this mayde, in excellent beautee

Aboven every wyght that men may see ;
For Nature hath with sovereyn diligence
Yformed her in so greet excellence

10

As thogh she wolde seyn—"Lo ! I, Nature,
Thus can I forme and peynte a creature
Whan that me list. Who can me countrefete ?
Pigmalion ? Noght, thogh that he forge and bete,
Or grave, or peynte ; for I dar wel seyn
Apelles, Zeuxis, sholde wirche in veyn
Outher to grave, or peynte, or forge, or bete,
If they presumed me to countrefete.

For He that is the former principal
Hath maked me his vicaire general

20

To forme and peynten erthely creature
 Ryght as me list—al thing is in my cure
 Under the mone that may wane and waxe—
 And for my werke nothing wol I axe.
 My Lord and I ben fully at acord.
 I made hir to the worship of my Lord.
 So do I alle myn othere creatures,
 What colour that they ben, or what figures.”

Thus semeth me that Nature wolde seye.—
 This mayde was of age twelf yeer and tweye, 30
 In which that Nature hadde swich delyt;
 For ryght as she can peynte a lilie whyt,
 And reed a rose, ryght with swich peynture
 She peynted hath this noble creature,
 Er she was born, upon hir limes free
 Wheras by ryght swiche colours sholde be;
 And Phebus dyed hath hir tresses grete
 Lyk to the stremes of his burned hete.

And, if that excellent was hir beautee,
 A thousandfold more vertuous was she. 40
 In hir ne lakked no condicioun
 That is to preyse, as by discrecioun.
 As wel in goost as body chast was she;
 For which she floured in virginitee
 With alle humilitee and abstinence,
 With alle attemperaunce and pacience,
 With mesure eek of bering and array.
 Discreet she was in answering alway;
 Thogh she were wys as Pallas, dar I seyn,
 Hir facound eek ful wommanly and pleyn; 50
 No countrefeted termes hadde she
 To seme wys; but, after hir degree,

She spak, and alle hir wordes, more and lesse,
 Souninge in vertu and in gentillesse.
 Shamfast she was in maydens shamfastnesse,
 Constant in herte, and ever in bisnesse
 To dryve hir out of ydel slogardye.
 Bachus hadde of hir mouth ryght no maistrye,
 For wyn and youthe doon Venus encrece
 As men in fyr wol casten oyle or grece ; 60
 And of her owne vertu, unconstreyned,
 She hath ful ofte tyme syk hir feyned,
 For that she wolde fleen the companye
 Wher lykly was to treten of folye,
 As is at festes, revels, and at daunces,
 That ben occasiouns of daliaunces.
 Swich thinges maken children for to be
 To sone rype and bold, as men may see,
 Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore.
 For al to sone may she lerne lore 70
 Of boldeness. . . .

Ye fadres, and ye modres eek also,
 Thogh ye han children be it oon or mo,
 Your is the charge of al hir surveyaunce
 Whyl that they ben under your governaunce.
 Beth war that by ensample of your livinge,
 Or by your necligence in chastisinge,
 That they ne perisse ; for I dar wel seye,
 If that they doon, ye shul it dere abeye.
 Under a shepherd softe and necligent 80
 The wolf hath many a sheep and lamb torent.
 Suffyseth oon ensample now as here,—
 For I moot turne agayn to my matere.

The Physician then relates the story of the tragedy.

NOTES.

1. *as telleth Titus Livius*. The great Roman historian, born at Patavium (Padua) B.C. 59, died 17 A.D. He wrote the *Annales*. But the professed obligation to Livy is misleading. The Doctor's story is not directly from the great historian: it is an expansion of a passage of about seventy lines in the *Roman de la Rose*.

11-13. Cf. Dunbar's *Gladeth thoue Queyne*—

“Of thy fair figure Nature might rejoice,
That so thee carved with all her curious sleight;
She has thee made this very world's choice,
Showing on thee her craftis and her might,
To see how fair she could depaint a wight,
How good, how noble of all condicioun,
How womanly in every man's sight:
Gladeth thou Queen of Scottis regioun!”
(*Spelling modernised.*)

14. Pygmalion, king of Cyprus, who fell in love with the ivory image of a woman which he had himself made.

16. *Apelles*, the most renowned of Grecian painters, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, whose portrait he only was allowed to paint.

Zeuxis, a famous Grecian painter (of an earlier date than Apelles), who painted a cluster of grapes so naturally that birds flew at the picture to eat the fruit.

26-28. A fine idea, to which an eighteenth-century poet, Christopher Smart, gives elaborate prominence in a *Song to David*.

39, 40. Cf. the portrait of Griselda, who was “fair ynogh to sighte”—

“But, for to speke of vertuous beautee,—
Than was she oon the faireste under sonne.”
—*The Clerkes Tale*, II.

49. *Pallas*. Minerva, goddess of Wisdom.

54. *Souninge in vertu*. Like the speech of the Clerk of Oxenford. For the expression, cf. our idiom, “This sounds true.”

58. So of patient Griselda is it said—

“Wel offer of the welle than of the tonne
She drank.”

X. THE PARDONER'S TALE.

THE outline at least of this tale appears to have been taken from a *fabliau*, now lost. The character of the story is hardly in keeping with that of the person who tells it; but, as the Pardoner himself said, a vicious man can tell a moral story.

IN Flaundes whylom was a companye

The three Of yonge folk that haunteden folye. . . .
Rioters They daunce and pleye at dees, both day and night,
and the
Treasure. And ete also and drinken over hir might; . . .

But it is grisly for to here hem swere :
Our blissed Lordes body they to-tere ;—
Hem thoughte Jewes rente him noght ynough ;
And ech of hem at othres sinne lough.

Thisse ryotoures three, of whiche I telle,
Long erst er prime rong of any belle, 10
Were setten in a tavern for to drinke ;
And, as they satte, they herde a belle clinke
Biforn a cors was caried to his grave.
That oon of hem gan calle unto his knave -
“Go bet,” quod he, “and axe redily
What cors is that that passeth heer forby,
And look that thou reporte his name wel.”
“Sir,” quod the boy, “but that nedeth never a del ;
It was me told er ye cam heer two houres.
He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres ; 20

And sodeynly he was yslain tonight,
 Fordronke, as he sat on his bench upright.
 Ther cam a privee theef, men clepen Deeth,
 That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
 And with his spere he smoot his herte atwo,
 And wente his wey withouten wordes mo.
 He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence.
 And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
 Methinketh that it were ful necessarie
 For to ben war of swich an adversarie. 30
 Beth redy for to mete him evermore;
 Thus taughte me my dame; I sey namore."

"By Seinte Marie!" seyde this taverner,
 "The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer,
 Henne over a mile, within a greet village,
 Both man and womman, child, and hyne, and page.
 I trowe his habitacioun be there.
 To ben avysed greet wisdom it were
 Er that he dide a man a dishonour."

"Ye, Goddes armes!" quod this ryotour; 40
 "Is it swich peril with him for to mete?
 I shal him seke by weye and eek by strete. . .
 Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other,
 And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,
 And we wol sleen this false traytour, Deeth;
 He shal be slayn which that so many sleeth,
 By Goddes dignitee! er it be night."

Togidres han thise three her trouthes plight,
 To live and dyen ech of hem for other,
 As though he were his owen yboren brother. 50
 And up they sterte al dronken, in this rage,

And forth they goon towards that village
 Of which the taverner had spoke biforn;
 And many a grisly ooth than han they sworn,
 And Cristes blessed body they to-rente,—
 Deeth shal be deed if that they may him hente.

Whan they han gon not fully half a myle,
 Right as they would han troden over a style,
 An old man and a povre with hem mette.
 This olde man ful mekely hem grette, 60
 And seyde thus—"Now, lordes, God yow see!"

The proudest of thise ryotoures three
 Answerde agayn—"What! earl, with sory grace,
 Why artow al forwrapped save thy face?
 Why livestow so longe in so greet age?"

This olde man gan loke in his visage
 And seyde thus—"For I ne camnat finde
 A man, though that I walked into Inde,
 Neither in citee nor in no village,
 That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age. 70
 And therfore mot I han myn age stille
 As longe time as it is Goddes wille.
 Ne Deeth, alas! ne wol not han my lyf;
 Thus walke I, lik a restelees caityf;
 And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
 I knokke with my staf, erly and late,
 And seye 'Leve moder, leet me in!
 Lo, how I wanie, flesh and blood and skin!
 Allas! whan shul my bones ben at reste?
 Moder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste, 80
 That in my chambre longe time hath be,
 Ye, for an haire clout to wrappe me!'

But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
For which ful pale and welked is my face

But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an old man vileinye,
But he trespasse in worde or elles in dede.
In Holy Writ ye may yourself wel rede—
'Agayns an old man, hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde aryse.' Wherfor I yeve yow reed, 90
Ne doth unto an old man noon harm now,
Namore than ye wolde men dide to yow
In age, if that ye so longe abide;
And God be with yow, wher ye go or ryde;
I mot go thider as I have to go."

"Nay, olde cherl! pardee, thou shalt nat so,"
Seyde this other hasardour anon;
"Thou partest nat so lightly, by Seint John!
Thou spak right now of thilke traitor, Deeth,
That in this contree alle our frendes sleeth: 100
Have heer my trouthe as thou art his aspye;
Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abyde,
By God and by the holy sacrament!
For soothly thou art oon of his assent
To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!"

"Now, sirs," quod he, "if that yow be so leef
To finde Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
For in that grove I lafte him, by my fey,
Under a tree; and ther he wol abide;
Nat for your best he wol him nothing hide. 110
See ye that ook? right ther ye shal him finde.
God save yow, that boughte ageyn mankinde,
And yow amend!"—seyde this olde man.

Thenne everich of thise riotoures ran
Til he com to the tree ; and ther they founde
Of florins fyne of golde, ycoyned rounde,
Wel ny a seven busshels, as hem thoughte.
No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte ;
But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
For that the florins ben so faire and brighte 120
That down they sette hem by this precious hord.
The yongest of hem spak the firste word :
“ Brethren,” quod he, “ tak kepe what I seye ;
My wit is greet, though that I bourde and pleye.
This tresour hath Fortune unto us given,
In mirthe and jolitee our lyf to liven ;
And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.
Ey ! Goddes precious dignitee ! who wende
Today that we sholde han so fair a grace ?
But mighte this gold be caried fro this place 130
Hoom to myn hous, or elles unto youre
For wel I wot that al this gold is oures—
Than weren we in hey felicitye.
But, trewely, by day it may nat be :
Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,
And for our owne tresour doon us honge.
This tresour moste yearied be by nighte
As wysly and as slyly as it mighte.
Wherfor I rede that cut among us alle
Be drawe, and lat see wher the cut wol falle ; 140
And he that hath the cut, with herte blythe
Shal renne to the toun, and that ful swythe,
And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively ;
Whyls two of us shul kepen subtilly
This tresour wel ; and, if he wol nat tarie,
Whan it is night we wol this tresour carie
By oon assent wher as us thinketh best.”

That oon of hem the cut broughte in his fest,
And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it wol falle.
And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle ; 150
And forth toward the toun he wente anon.
And al so sone as that he was agon
That oon of hem spak thus unto that other :—
“Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne brother :
Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
Thou wost wel that our felawe is agon ;
And heer is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
That shal departed been among us three.
But, natheless, if I can shape it so
That it departed were betwix us two, 160
Hadde I nat doon a frendes torn to thee?”

That other answerde—“I not how that may be ;
He wot how that the gold is with us tweye.
What shal we doon ? What shulde we to him seye ?”

“Shal it be conseil ?” seyde the firste shrewe,
“And I shal tellen thee in wordes fewe
What we shal doon, and bringe it wel aboute.”

“I graunte,” quod that other, “out of doute,
That, by my trouthe, I shal thee nat biwreye.”

“Now,” quod the first, “thou wost wel we ben tweye,
And two of us shal strengre be than oon. 171
Look whan that he is sette, and right anon
Arys, as though thou woldest with him pleye ;
And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes tweye
Whyls that thou strogelest with him as in game ;
And with thy dagger look thou do the same.

And than shal al this gold departed be,
 My dere frend, betwixen me and thee.
 Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfille,
 And pleye at dees right at our owne wille." 180

And thus acorded been thise shrewes tweye
 To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.

This yongest, which that wente unto the toun,
 Ful oft in herte he rolleth up and doun
 The beautee of thise florins newe and brighte :
 'O Lord !' quod he, "if so were that I mighte
 Have al this tresour to myself allone,
 Ther is no man that liveth under the trone
 Of God that sholde live so mery as I."
 And, atte last, the Feend, our enemy, 190
 Putte in his thought that he shold poyson beye
 With which he mighte sleen his felawes tweye. . . .
 And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
 Into the toun, unto a potecarie,
 And preyede him that he him wolde selle
 Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes quelle ;
 And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe
 That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde yslawe,
 And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he mighte,
 On vermin that destroyede him by nighte. 200

The potecarie answerd—"And thou shalt have
 A thing that, also God my soule save,
 In al this world ther nis no creature
 That ete or dronke hath of this confeture
 Nought but the mountance of a corn of whete
 That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete ;

Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse whyle
 Than thou wolt gon a paas nat but a myle—
 This poyson is so strong and violent.”

This cursed man hath in his bond yhent 210
 This poyson in a box ; and sith he ran
 Into the nexte strete unto a man,
 And borwed of him large botels three.
 And in the two his poyson poured he ;
 The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke,—
 For al the night he shoop him for to swinke
 In caryinge of the gold out of that place.
 And, whan this ryotour, with sory grace,
 Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,
 To his felawes ageyn repaireth he. 220

What nedeth it to sermone of it more ?
 For, right as they had cast his deeth bifore,
 Right so they han him slayn, and that anoon.
 And, whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon—
 “ Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us mery,
 And afterward we wol his body bery.
 And with that word it happed him, per cas,
 To take the botel ther the poyson was,
 And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also,—
 For which anon they storven bothe two. 230

NOTES.

10. At prime (about 9 A.M.) a bell was rung for morning prayer.

12. *they herde a belle clinke.* The story refers (see l. 27) to a visitation of the Plague, which recurred almost decennially from 1349. It

was the custom for the sexton to walk before the corpse at a funeral ringing a hand-bell.

15. "*Go bet!*" Lit., "Go better!" a hunting cry to encourage dogs.

21. *tonight*. The night just passed.

61. *God yow see!* God watch over you!

80. *chaunge my chest*. Give all the clothes in my chest in exchange for; exchange my whole wardrobe for (a shroud). It is still, in some homes, the custom to keep clothes, and even money and valuables, locked in a chest in the sleeping apartment.

86. *To speken . . . vileinye*. To speak rudely. Cf. the Knight's practice—

"He never yit no vileinye ne sayde
In al his lyf unto no maner wight."

—Prologue.

107. Probably directing them to a churchyard.

112. *boughte ageyn*. Redeemed.

116. Florins were first coined at Florence (hence their name) in 1252.

136. *doon us honge*. Cause hang us. Hanging for theft was long a common punishment in England.

141. *the cut*. The cut straw—i.e., the shortest. See Prologue, l. 132—

"He which that hath the shortest shal biginne."

In France it is the long straw (*la longue paille*) that carries the lot.

153. *That oon . . . that other*. Abbreviated, or rather corrupted, into "tha tone . . . tha tother," then into "one . . . t'other." Cp. "a newt" from "an ewt."

158. *departed*. Common in Chaucer, for parted or shared. Notice a peculiar corruption of "depart," in the sense of divide or sever, in the marriage service—"till death us *do part*" (for "depart").

162. "*I not*." I ne wot, I know not. See Note on Abbreviations in the Grammat. Introd., p. xxxiii.

165. "*Shal it be conseil?*" Shall it be kept secret? (as being said in confidence).

201. See *Romco and Juliet*, Act V. sc. i., for a similar apothecary.

202. *also*. The original form of "as." Translate "also God, my soule save"—"as I hope for salvation," or "so may God save my soul at last."

208. *gan a paas nat but a myle*. Walk at an ordinary pace no more than only a mile.

XI. FROM THE WIFE OF BATH'S TALE.

THE story told by the garrulous Wife of Bath—who only begins her story after she has unburdened her mind of her own long and varied experiences of the married state—is a fairy tale of the mythical reign of King Arthur. She tells how a knight or bachelor of the Court, for an act of villainy, was condemned to death unless, within a year and a day, he could answer the question—"What do women desire most of all?" He spends the interval of grace in making inquiries everywhere, and at last is informed by an old and ugly woman, whom he meets somewhat mysteriously, that on one condition she will tell him the secret. The condition is that he will grant her whatever boon she asks as soon as the ladies of the Court accept his answer. He readily agrees; whereupon she communicates the secret to him in a whisper. His answer is accepted: neither maid, nor wife, nor widow can contradict it:—

"Wommen desyren to have sovereyntee
As wel over hir housbond as hir love,
And for to been in maistrie him above."

The old woman then presents herself, and claims the fulfilment of the condition. She demands marriage. The knight ruefully keeps his word: she becomes his bride, her face wreathed in smiles, though "foul and old and poor." He cannot look at her but with aversion. "What is my guilt?" she asks; "tell me, for heaven's sake, and it shall be amended, if I may."

"Amended!" quod this knight, "allas! nay, nay!
It wol nat been amended never mo!
Thou art so loothly, and so old also,
And therto comen of so lowe a kinde!"

Thereupon she lectures him on the subject of gentility, and concludes by asking whether he would leave her ugly and faithful, or unfaithful and fair! The knight thoughtfully considers all that she has said, and at last replies humbly that he will leave it to her to decide. It is a wise reply; and when next he looks at his bride, he finds that she is both young and fair, and hears her promise of devotion and loyalty besides.

BUT for ye speken of swich gentillesse
On Rank As is descended out of old richesse,
and That therfor sholden ye be gentilmen;
Riches. Swich arrogance nis nat worth an hen.

Loke who that is most vertuous alway,
 Privee and pert, and most entendeth ay
 To do the gentil dedes that he can,
 And tak him for the grettest gentilman.

Crist wol we clayme of Him our gentillesse,
 Nat of our eldres for hir old richesse. 10
 For, thogh they yive us al hir heritage,
 For which we clayme to been of heigh parage,
 Yet may they nat biquethe, for no thing,
 To noon of us hir vertuous living
 That made hem gentilmen ycalled be,
 And bad us folwen hem in swich degree.

Wel can the wyse poete of Florence
 That highte Dant speken in this sentence:
 Lo, in swich maner rym is Dantes tale—
Ful selde upryseth by his branches smale 20
Prowesse of man; for God, of his goodnesse,
Wol that of Him we clayme our gentillesse;

For of our eldres may we nothing clayme
But temporel thing, that man may hurte and mayme.

Eek every wight wot this as wel as I,
If gentillesse were planted naturelly
Unto a certeyn linage, doun the lyne,
Privee ne pert, than wolde they never fyne
To doon of gentillesse the faire offyce :
They mighte do no vileinye or vyce. 30

Tak fyr, and ber it in the derkeste hous
Betwix this and the Mount of Caucasus,
And lat men shette the dores, and go thenne ;
Yet wol the fyr as faire lye and brenne
As twenty thousand men might it beiholde ;
His offyce naturel ay wol it holde,
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye.
Heer may ye see wel how that genterye
Is nat annexed to possessioun,
Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun, 40
Alwey as dooth the fyr, lo ! in his kynde ;
For, God it woot, men may ful often fynde
A lordes sone do shame and vileinye ;
And he that wol han prys of his gentrye
For he was boren of a gentil hous
And had his eldres noble and vertuous,
And nil himselven do no gentil dedes
Ne folwe his gentil auncestre that deed is—
He nis nat gentil be he duk or erl,
For vileyns sinful dedes make a cherl. 50

For gentilnesse nis but renomee
Of thyne auncestres for hir heigh bountee,

Which is a straunge thing to thy persone.
 Thy gentillesse cometh fro God allone.
 Than comth our verray gentillesse of grace ;
 It was, no thing, biquethe us with our place.

Redeth Senek ; ther shul ye seen, no drede is,
 That he is gentil that doth gentil dedes.
 And therfor, atte laste, I thus conclude,
 Al were it that myne auncestres were rude, 60
 Yet may the hye God (and so hope I)
 Graunte me grace to liven vertuously.
 Thanne am I gentil whan that I biginne
 To liven vertuously and weyven sinne.

And theras ye of povert me repreve—
 The hye God, on whom that we bileve,
 In wilful povert chees to live his lyf,
 And, certes, every man, mayden, or wyf
 May understonde that Jesus, hevene King,
 Ne wolde nat chese a vicious living. 70

Glad povert is an honest thing, certeyn ;
 This wol Senek and othre clerkes seyn.
 Whoso that halt him payd of his poverte,
 I holde him riche, al hadde he nat a sherte.
 He that coveyteth is a povre wight,
 For he wolde han that is nat in his might ;
 But he that noght hath, ne coveyteth have,
 Is riche although ye holde him but a knave
 Verray povert, it singeth proprely !
 Juvenal seith of povert merily— 80
*The povre man, whan he goth by the weye,
 Bifore the theves he may singe and playe.*

Povert is hateful good, and, as I gesse,
 A ful greet bringer out of businesse ;
 A greet amender eek of sapience
 To him that taketh it in pacience.

Povert is this, although it seme elenge,—
 Possessioun ! that no wight wol chalenge.

Povert ful often, whan a man is lowe,
 Makth him his God and eek himself to knowe. 90

Povert a spectacle is, as thinketh me,
 Thurgh which he may his verray frendes see.

NOTES.

1. *But for ye spoken.* But in respect of the fact that ye, &c.
4. *nat worth an hen.* Of little value. Cf. such other trifling values in Chaucer as a bean, a tare, an oyster. The Prior (see Prol.) cared not "a pulled hen" for a certain text.
- 7, 8. Handsome is that handsome does. See also l. 58, below.
9. *Crist wol.* Christ desires that.
13. *for no thing.* On no account. The Merchant (see Prol.) would have the sea between England and Flanders kept free of pirates "for any thing"—i.e., whatever it might cost.
16. *And bad us folwen hem in swich degree.* And that set us an example in that respect ("vertuous living", which we should follow).
18. *Dant.* See note to l. 55 of *The Monk's Tale*, supra.
28. *never fyne.* Never cease (Lat. *finis*, an end).
50. So, as the Don said, Dulcinea de Toboso was "the daughter of her own good deeds." See also l. 58, below.
53. *a strange thing to thy persone.* Not a personal possession : not inherited or inheritable.
55. *comth of grace.* *Dei gratiâ.*

57. *Redeth Senek.* Read Seneca. The philosopher was born a few years B.C.; his wealth excited the cupidity of Nero, and to escape death at Nero's order he committed suicide, 65 A.D.

71. *Glad povert is an honest thing.* Cf. Burns's *A Man's a Man for a' that*—

“Is there for honest poverty
That hangs his head and a' that?
The coward-slave! we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!”

77. *ne coveyteth have.* Nor is desirous of having anything (lit., nor covets to have).

80. *Juvenal.* Roman satirist; fl. about the close of the first century.

83. *hateful good.* An instance of oxymoron.

91, 92. Poverty is a pair of spectacles, an eye-glass, as it seems to me, by means of which a man can discover his true friends.

XII. FROM THE SUMMONER'S TALE.

WHEN the Wife of Bath had ended her story, the Friar, who from the first had taken an ill-concealed personal dislike to the Summoner, now proposed to entertain the company with the recital of a merry tale at the expense of the whole fraternity of summoners.

“I wol yow of a somnour telle a game.
Pardee! ye may wel knowe by the name
That of a summour may no good be seyde.”

The Host offered little objection to the proposal, but hoped the Friar would not be too personal. “Let him say what he likes,” said the Summoner; “when it comes to my turn to speak, I shall pay him back in full measure: I shall let the company know what a great honour it is to be a flattering Limitour.”

The Friar was as good as his word, and told a story which evoked the utmost resentment of the Summoner. As soon as he had finished—

“This Somnour in his stiropes hye stood;
Upon this Frere his herte was so wood
That lyk an aspen leef he quook for yre.
‘Lordinges,’ quod he, ‘but o thing I desyre;
I yow biseke that, of your curteisye,
Sin ye han herd this false Frere lye,
As suffreth me I may my tale telle!’”

The altercation doubtless amused the company, and it was only poetical justice to let him have his inning. The full humour of the situation will be understood by recalling the portrait of the parties—one with bright well-opened eyes, strong limbs, and

neck white as the fleur-de-lys ; the other with fierce small eyes excited manner, and face red as fire and disfigured with pimples (see Prologue).

From his office, and still more from the manner in which he discharged its duties, the Summoner was an unpopular and even odious character throughout the country. He was the officer of the Deacons' court, and it was his business to find out and cite before the Archdeacon all delinquents who led vicious and immoral lives : their punishment was rebuke and fine for the most part. He often connived at private vice, where he could levy blackmail.

LORDINGES, ther is in Yorkshire, as I gesse,

A mersshy lond ycalled Holdernesse,

The In which ther went a limitour aboute

begging To preche, and eek to begge, it is no doute.

Friar. And so bifel that on a day this frere

Had preched at a chirche in his manere,

And specially aboven everything

Excited he the peple in his preching

To trentals, and to yive, for Goddes sake,

Wherwith men mighten holy houses make. . . . 10

And, whan this frere had seyde al his entente,

With *qui cum patre* forth his wey he wente.

When folk in chirche had yive him what hem leste,

He wente his wey, no lenger wolde he reste,

With scrippe and pyked staf ytukked hye ;

In every hous he gan to poure and pryde,

And beggeth mele and corn, or elles chese—

“Or elles what yow list, we may nat chese ;

A Goddes halpeny or a masse peny ;

Or yive us of your brawn, if ye have eny ; 20

Bacoun or beef, or swich thing as ye finde ;”

And leyde it in his felawes sak bihinde. . . .

So longe he wente hous by hous, til he
 Cam til an hous ther he was wont to be
 Refreshed more than in an hundred places.
 Sik lay the housbondman whos that the place is ;
 Bedrede upon a couche lowe he lay.
 "*Deus hic*," quod he ; "O Thomas ! frend, good day,"
 Seyde this frere, al curteisly and softe ;
 "Thomas," quod he, "God yelde yow ! Ful ofte 30
 Have I upon this bench yfaren ful wel ;
 Heer have I eten many a mery mel."
 And fro the bench he drof away the cat,
 And leyde adoun his potent and his hat,
 And eek his scrippe, and sette him softe adoun.
 His felawe was go walked into toun.

"O dere maister," quod the syke man,
 "How han ye fare sithen that March bigan ?
 I saugh yow noght this fourteenight or more."

"God wot," quod he, "laboured have I ful sore, 40
 And, specially, for thy savacioun
 Have I seyde many a precious orisoun,
 And for our othre frendes, God hem blesse !
 I have today been at your chirche at messe,
 And seyde a sermon after my simple wit,
 Nat al after the text of Holy Writ ;
 For it is hard to yow, as I suppose,
 And therfor wol I teche yow ay the glose.
 Glosinge is a glorious thing, certeyn,
 For lettre sleeth, so as we clerkes seyn. 50
 Ther have I taught hem to be charitable,
 And spende hir good ther it is resonable ;
 And ther I saugh our dame—a ! wher is she ?"

"Yond in the yerd I trowe that she be,"
Seyde this man, "and she wol come anon."

"Ey, maister! welcome be ye, by Seint John!"
Seyde this wyf; "how fare ye hertely?"

The frere aryseth up ful curteisly,
And hir embraceth in his armes narwe,
And kiste hir swete, and chirketh as a sparwe 60
With his lippes: "Dame," quod he, "right wel,
As he that is your servant everydel.
Thanked be God, that yow gaf soule and lyf.
Yet saugh I nat this day so fair a wyf
In al the chirche, God so save me!"

"Ye, God amende defautes, sir," quod she
"Algates welcome be ye, by my fay!"

"Graunt mercy, dame, this have I founde alway.
But of your grete goodnesse, by your leve,
I wolde prey yow that ye nat yow greve 70
I wol with Thomas speke a litel throwe.
Thise curats ben ful necligent and slowe
To grope tendrely a conscience.
In shrift and preching is my diligence,
And studie in Petres wordes and in Poules.
I walke, and fische Cristen mennes soules,
To yelden Jesu Crist his propre rente:
To sprede his word is sette al myn entente."

"Now, by your leve, O dere Sir," quod she,
"Chydeh him wel, for Seinte Trinitee. 80
He is as angry as a pissemeyre,

Though that he have al that he can desyre. . . .
I may not plese him in no maner cas."

"O Thomas! *Je vous dy*, Thomas! Thomas!
This maketh the fend; this moste ben amended.
Ire is a thing that hye God defended,
And therof wol I speke a word or two."

"Now, maister," quod the wyf, "er that I go,
What wol ye dyne? I wol go therabout." "

"Now, dame," quod he, "*je vous dy saunz doute*, 90
Have I nat of a capon but the livere,
And of your softe breed nat but a shivere,
And after that a rosted pigges heed
(But that I nolde no beest for me were deed),
Thanne had I with yow homly suffisaunce;
I am a man of litel sustenaunce.
My spirit hath his fostring in the Bible.
The body is ay so redy and so penyble
To wake that my stomak is destroyed.
I prey yow, dame, that ye be nat anoyed 100
Though I so frendly yow my conseil shewe.
Pardee, I nolde nat telle it but a fewe."

"Now, sir," quod she, "but o word er I go;
My child is deed withinne thise wykes two,
Sone after that ye wente out of this toun."

"His deeth saugh I by revelacioun,"
Seith this frere, "at hoom in our dortour.
I dar wel seyn that er that half an hour
After his deeth I saugh him born to blisse
In myn avisioun, so God me wisse! 110

So dide our sexteyn and our fermerere,
 That han been trewe freres fifty yeer ;
 They may now, God be thanked of his lone,
 Maken hir jubilee and walke allone.
 And up I roos, and al our covent eek,
 With many a tere triking on my cheke,
 Withouten noyse or clateringe of belles ;
Te Deum was our song and nothing elles,—
 Save that to Crist I seyde an orisoun,
 Thanking Him of his revelacioun. 120
 For, sire and dame, trusteth me right wel
 Our orisouns ben more effectuel,
 And more we seen of Cristes secree thinges
 Than burel folk, although that they ben kinges.
 We live in povert and in abstinence,
 And burel folk in richesse and despence
 Of mete and drinke, and in hir foul delyt.
 We han this worldes lust al in despyt.
 Lazar and Dives liveden diversly,
 And diverse guerdon hadde they therby. 130
 Whoso wol preye, he moot faste and be clene,
 And fatte his soule and make his body lene.
 We faren as seith thapostle ; cloth and fode
 Suffysen us, though they be nat ful gode.
 The clennesses and the fastinge of us freres
 Maketh that Crist accepteth our preyeres. . . .
 And specially our swete Lord Jesus
 Spak this by freres whan he seyde thus—
Blessed be they that poure in spirit been.
 And so forth in the Gospel may ye seen 140
 Whether it be lyker our professioun
 Or hers that swimmen in possessioun.
 Fy on hir pompe and on hir glotonye,
 And on hir lewednesse ! I hem defye. . . .

Who folweth Cristes gospel and his fore
 But we that humble ben, and chast and pore,
 Workers of Goddes word, not auditours?
 Therfor, right as an hauk upon a sours
 Upspringeth into their, right so prayeres
 Of charitable and chaste bisy freres 150
 Maken hir sours to Goddes eres two.

Thomas! Thomas! so mote I ryde or go,
 And by that lord that cleped is Seint Ive,
 Nere thou our brother, sholdestow never thryve!
 In our chapitre praye we day and night
 To Crist, that He thee sende hele and might,
 Thy body for to welden hastily."

"God wot," quod he, "nothing therof fele I.
 As help me Crist, as I in fewe yeres
 Han spended upon dyvers maner freres 160
 Ful many a pound; yet fare I never the bet.
 Certeyn, my good have I almost biset.
 Farwel, my gold! for it is al ago."

The frere answerde—"O Thomas, dostow so?
 What nedeth yow dyverse freres seche?
 What nedeth him that hath a parfit leche
 To sechen othere leches in the toun?
 Your inconstance is your confusioun.
 Holde ye, than, me, or elles our covent,
 To praye for yow ben insufficient? 170
 Thomas, that jape nis nat worth a myte;
 Your maladye is for we han to lyte.
A! yive that covent half a quarter otes;
A! yive that covent four and twenty groles;
A! yive that frere a peny and lat him go—
 Nay, nay, Thomas! for it may noght be so.

What is a ferthing worth departe in twelve?
 Lo, ech thing that is oned in himselve
 Is more strong than whan it is toscatered.
 Thomas, of me thou shalt nat ben yflatered. 180
 Thou woldest han our labour al for noght.
 The hye God that al this world hath wrought
 Seith that the werkman worthy is his hyre.
 Thomas, noght of your tresor I desyre
 As for myself, but for that our covent
 To preye for yow is ay so diligent,
 And for to builden Cristes owne chirche. . . .
 And, Thomas, leve brother, leve thyn ire;
 Thou shalt me fynde as just as is a squire.
 Hold nat the develes knyf ay at thyn herte; 190
 Thyn anger doth thee al to sore smerte;
 But shewe to me al thy confessioun."

"Nay," quod the syke man, "by Seint Simoun!
 I have ben shriven this day of my curat;
 I have him told al hoolly myn estat.
 Nedeth namore to speke of it," seith he,
 "But if me list of myn humilitee."

"Yif me than of thy good to make our cloistre,"
 Quod he, "for many a muscle and many an oistre
 Hath ben our fode, our cloistre for to reyse, 200
 Whan other men han ben ful wel at eyse.
 And yet, God wot, unnethe the foundement
 Parfourned is, ne of our pavement
 Nis nat a tyle yet withinne our wones;
 Pardee, we owen fourty pound for stones.
 Now help, Thomas, for Him that harwed helle!
 For elles moste we our bokes selle.
 And, if ye lakke our predicacioun,

Than goth the world al to destruccioun.
 For whoso wolde us fro this world bireve, 210
 So God me save, Thomas, by your leve,
 He wolde bireve out of this world the sonne,
 For who can teche and werken as we conne? . . .
 Now, Thomas, help, for Seinte Charitee!"
 And doun anon he sette him on his knee.
 This syke man wex wel ny wood for ire;
 He wolde that the frere had ben on fire
 What with his fals dissimulacioun:
 "No thing that is in my possessioun
 Yive I," quod he; "and therwith have good day!" 220

His meynee, whan they herde of this affrey,
 Cam lepinge in, and chased out the frere;
 And forth he goth with a ful angry chere;
 He grinte with his teeth, so was he wroth,
 And in a rage a sturdy pas he goth.

WHILOM ther was an irous potestat,
 As seith Senek, that duringe his estaat,
The irous Upon a day outriden knightes two;
Potestat. And, as Fortune wolde that it were so,
 That oon of hem cam hoom, that other noght. 230
 Anon the knight before the juge is broght,
 That seyde thus—"Thou hast thy felawe slayn,—
 For which I deme thee to deeth certayn."
 And to another knight commanded he—
 "Go, lede him to the deeth, I charge thee."
 And happed, as they wente by the weye
 Toward the place ther he sholde deye,
 The knight cam which men wenden had be deed.

Than thoughten they it were the beste reed
 To lede hem bothe to the juge agayn. 240
 They seiden—"Lord, the knight ne hath nat slayn
 His felawe : here he standeth hool alyve."
 "Ye shul be deed," quod he, "so mote I thryve !
 That is to seyn, bothe oon, and two and three !"
 And to the firste knight right thus spak he—
 "I dampned thee : thou most algate be deed.
 And thou also most nedes lese thyn heed ;
 For thou art cause why thy felawe deyth."
 And to the thridde knight right thus he seyth -
 "Thou hast nat doon that I comanded thee." 250
 And thus he leet don sleen hem alle three.

NOTES.

2. *Holdernessee*. In the East Riding of Yorkshire.
9. *trentals*. Thirty masses for the dead, in a set.
10. *holy houses make*. See l.187, below.
12. *Qui cum Patre*, &c. In full—"Qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula.—Amen." "Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit livest and reignest God through all ages.—Amen." With this formula it was usual to conclude the sermon. It will be found after the *Parson's Tale* in the Canterbury series, in a P.S., of the nature of a prayer, commonly ascribed to Chaucer speaking in his own person.
28. "*Deus hic!*" God be here, or God bless all here!—still a common salutation on entering an Irish cottage.
33. *he drof away the cat*. A realistic touch. If the cat knew to sit soft, so did the friar.
34. *his potent*. The *pyked staf* of l. 15.
36. *His felawe*. The lay brother, who received the alms which the priest in orders solicited.
68. *Graunt mercy*. Fr., Great or best thanks to you !
72. *Thise curats*. The local clergyman ; the parish priest.
76. Referring to the text, "I will make you fishers of men."
85. *This maketh the fend*. This is the devil's doing.

89. *I wol go theraboute.* I will set about preparing your dinner at once.

90. *Je vous dy saunz doute.* I tell you frankly.

91. *nat of a capon but the liver.* Only the liver wing [still regarded as a delicacy] of a fowl. *Nat . . . but*=only, no more than.

98. *so redy and so penyble (To wake).* So willing and so inured to watch and pray.

101. *conseil.* Private wish. See l. 165, *supra*, of *The Pardoner's Tale*.

110. *God me wisse!* God guide me! Old Eng. *wissian*. The word is still current in rural Scotland. Allan Ramsay has the word in his Scots version of Horace, *Car. i. 9* :—

“Driving their ba's frae whins or tee,
There's no' ae gowfer to be seen ;
Nor doucer folk wysing ajee
The bias bouls on Tamson's green.”

111. *sexteyn.* Sacristan, or sexton, with charge of the sacred vestments and vessels as well as of the building.

fermerere. Friar in charge of an infirmary.

113. *his lone.* His gift ; his grace.

129. *Lazar and Dives.* See the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19-31).

139. One of the Beatitudes (Matt. v. 3).

145. *fore.* Footsteps. Old Eng. *faran*, to go.

147. *not auditours.* Not hearers only,—referring to the text.

148. *upon a sours.* Lat. *surgere*, to rise : in a rising flight ; in swift flight upward.

173-175. Imitating Thomas.

178. *oned in himselve.* United in itself.

183. “The labourer is worthy of his hire.”

189. *as just as is a squire.* As just as a square, or carpenter's rule.

199, 200. Cf. “nat worth an oistre” in the Prol. (*The Monk*), an oyster being regarded as of trifling value.

220. *have good day!* Dismissing him abruptly.

226. *an irous potestat.* Angry potentate.

227. *seith Senek.* Seneca's *De Ira* is quoted. See note to l. 57, from *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, *supra*.

his estaat=his period of office.

that duringe his=during whose. See Gram. Note on Rel. Pron.,

p. xxxii.

251. *leet don sleen.* Caused to be slain. Cf. “leet don cryen” in *The Squire's Tale*, ll. 25, 26, *infra*.

XIII. THE CLERK'S TALE.

THE *Clerk's Tale* of patient Griselda was written by Chaucer about ten years before he thought of the *Canterbury Pilgrimage*, and was easily incorporated into the Canterbury scheme. Chaucer was in Italy on diplomatic service in 1373, and, as he tells us himself, met Petrarch at Padua on that occasion, and heard from his lips that famous story of wifely obedience and devotion. That he was also possessed of Petrarch's Latin version of the story when, presumably in 1374, he was writing his own English poem on the subject, is abundantly evident, for he often follows the Latin MS. with perfect fidelity. The closeness of his translation, indeed, especially when taken along with his use of a stanzaic measure (rime royal) in the metrical expression of it, is a proof of its early date. He allowed himself more freedom, and preferred pentametric couplets, in his later adaptations. But, though Chaucer was immediately indebted to Petrarch for the story, its invention is due to Boccaccio, whose narrative Petrarch followed, but not slavishly. The original, then, of *The Clerk's Tale* is Boccaccio's, and forms the last of the hundred stories of the *Decameron*.

The pathetic story of patient Griselda well fits the character of the gentle Clerk, whose narration of it is in a manner perfectly sympathetic with the suffering of the heroine. Yet the quiet humour of the Envoy is in nowise inconsistent with our idea of his character: he seems to perceive, as on reflection the reader feels, that Griselda's absolute devotion was absurd and contrary to common-sense, that her obedience was carried to undue extremes, and was impossible to human nature.

The verse structure of the Envoy is worthy of note. It consists of six stanzas, of six lines each, with only three sets of rhimes throughout—twelve in *-ence*, eighteen in *-aille*, and six in *-ynde*.

The fifth line of each stanza furnishes a link to the chain of rime which connects the six stanzas. The result is a marvel of symmetrical sound. 6 (*ababcb*) represents the rime formula.

WALTER, Marquis of Saluzzo, was beloved by all his subjects. They had but one fault to find with him—he was unmarried. As he gave no sign of relinquishing what was apparently to him a happy bachelorhood, they sent a deputation to remonstrate with him on his improvidence, and to tell him in plain words what they wanted. To give him as little trouble as possible, the deputation were even commissioned to say that they would undertake to select a wife for him. Why did they wish him to marry?

“For, if it so bifelle, as God forbede,
That thurgh your deeth your linage sholde slake,
And that a straunge successour sholde take
Your heritage, O! wo were us alyve!
Wherfor we pray you hastily to wyve.”

The Marquis was willing to accede to their request, only he would relieve them of the delicate task of selecting a wife by undertaking the business himself; and, in his turn, he would beg a boon of them—viz., that they would loyally receive and honour as their sovereign lady whatever person he might choose as his wife. They readily agreed, and a day was fixed as the limit of the time within which the marriage should take place.

Time passed, and preparations for the marriage festival began to be made at the palace; but still there was no word of the bride. The preparations, though elaborate, were at last all made; the day on which the marriage must take place arrived; and public curiosity, on the most important point of all, still remained ungratified.

Noght fer fro thilke paleys honourable

Theras the markis shoop his mariage

The Wed- Ther stood a throp, of site delitable,
ding of In which that povre folk of that village
Griselda. Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage,

And of hir labour took hir sustenance

After that the erthe yaf hem habundance.

7

Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a man

Which that was holden povrest of hem alle ;

But hye God som tyme senden can

His grace into a litel oxes stalle.

Janicula men of that throp him calle.

A doghter hadde he, fair ynogh to syghte,

And Grisildis this yonge mayden hyghte.

14

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,

Than was she oon the faireste under sonne ;

For povreliche yfostred up was she,

No likerous lust was thurgh hir herte yronne ;

Wel offer of the welle than of the tonne

She drank, and, for she wolde vertu plesse,

She knew wel labour, but non ydel ese.

21

But, thogh this mayde tendre were of age,

Yet in the brest of hir virginitee

Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage ;

And in greet reverence and charitee

Hir olde povre fader fostred she.

A fewe sheep, spinning, on feeld she kepte ;

She wolde noght been ydel til she slepte.

28

And, whan she homward cam, she wolde bringe

Wortes or othere herbes tymes ofte,

The whiche she shredde and seeth for hir livinge ;
 And made hir bed ful harde and nothing softe ;
 And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on lofte
 With everich obeisaunce and diligence
 That child may doon to fadres reverence. 35

Upon Grisilde, this povre creature,
 Ful ofte sythe this markis caste his ye,
 As he on hunting rood paraventure ;
 And, whan it fil that he myghte hir espye,
 He not with wantoun loking of folye
 His yen caste on hir, but in sad wyse
 Upon hir chere he wolde him ofte avyse, 42

Commending in his herte hir wommanhede
 And eek hir vertu, passing any wyght
 Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede.
 For, thogh the peple have no greet insyght
 In vertu, he considered ful ryght
 Hir bountee, and disposed that he wolde
 Wedde hir oonly if ever he wedde sholde. 49

The day of wedding cam, but no wyght can
 Telle what womman that it sholde be ;
 For which merveille wondred many a man,
 And seyden, whan they were in privetee,—
 “ Wol nat our lord yet leve his vanitee ?
 Wol he nat wedde ? allas ! allas the whyle !
 Why wol he thus himself and us bigyle ? ” 56

But natheles this markis hath doon make
 Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,
 Broches, and ringes for Grisildis sake ;
 And of hir clothing took he the mesure

By a mayde lyk to hir in stature ;
And eek of othere ornamentes alle
That unto swich a wedding sholde falle. 63

The tyme of undern of the same day
Approcheth that this wedding sholde be ;
And al the paleys put was in array,
Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his degree ;
Houses of office stuffed with plentee
Ther maystow seen of deyntevous vitaille
That may be founde as fer as last Itaille. 70

This roial markis, richely arrayed,
Lordes and ladyes in his companye,
The whiche unto the feste were yprayed,
And of his retenue the bachelrye,
With many a soun of sondry melodye,
Unto the village, of the which I tolde,
In this array the ryghte wey han holde. 77

Grisilde of this, God wot, ful innocent,
That for hir shapen was al this array,
To fecchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh hoom as sone as ever she may,—
For wel she had herd seyde that thilke day
The markis sholde wedde, and, if she myghte,
She wolde fayn han seyn som of that syghte. 84

She thoghte—“ I wol with othere maydens stonde,
That ben my felawes, in our dore, and se
The markisesse, and therfor wol I fonde
To doon at hoom, as sone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth unto me,

And than I may at leyser hir biholde,
If she this wey unto the castel holde." 91

And, as she wolde over hir threshfold gon,
The markis cam, and gan hir for to calle ;
And she set down hir water pot anon
Bisyde the threshfold, in an oxes stalle,
And down upon hir knees she gan to falle,
And with sad contenance kneleth stille
Til she had herd what was the lordes wille. 98

This thoghtful markis spak unto this mayde
Ful sobrelly, and seyde in this manere—
“Wher is your fader, Grisildis ?” he sayde,
And she with reverence in humble chere
Answerde—“ Lord, he is al ready here.”
And in she gooth withouten lenger lette,
And to the markis she hir fader fette. 105

He by the hond than took this olde man,
And seyde thus, whan he him hadde asyde,—
“Janicula, I neither may ne can
Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde :
If that thou vouchesauf, whatso bityde,
Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,
As for my wyf unto hir lyves ende. 112

Thou lovest me, I wot it wel, certeyn,
And art my feithful lige man ybore ;
And al that lyketh me, I dar wel seyn,
It lyketh thee, and specially therfore
Tel me that poynt that I have seyde bifore,
If that thou wolt unto that purpos drawe,
To take me as for thy sone in lawe ?” 119

This sodeyn cas this man astoned so
That reed he wex, abayst, and al quaking
He stood : unnethes seyde he wordes mo
But only thus—"Lord," quod he, "my willing
Is as ye wole, ne ayeines your lyking
I wol no thing ; ye be my lord so dere ;
Ryght as yow lust governeth this matere." 126

"Yet wol I," quod this markis softely,
"That in thy chambre I and thou and she
Have a collacion ; and wostow why ?
For I wol axe if it hir wille be
To be my wyf, and reule hir after me.
And al this shal be doon in thy presence ;
I wol noght speke out of thyn audience." 133

And, in the chambre whyl they were aboute
Hir tretis, which as ye shal after here,
The peple cam unto the hous withoute,
And wondred hem in how honest manere
And tentilly she kepte hir fader dere.
But outerly Grisildis wondre myghte,
For never erst ne saugh she swich a syghte. 140

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned
To seen so greet a gest come in that place ;
She never was to swiche gestes woned ;
For which she loked with ful pale a face.
But shortly forth this tale for to chace,
Thise arn the wordes that the markis sayde
To this benigne verray feithful mayde :— 147

"Grisilde," he seyde, "ye shul wel understonde
It lyketh to your fader and to me

That I yow wedde ; and eek it may so stonde,
As I suppose ye wol that it so be.

But thise demandes axe I first," quod he,
"That, sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,
Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse ?

154

I seye this—Be ye redy with good herte
To al my lust, and that I frely may,
As me best thinketh, do yow laughe or smerte,
And never ye to grucche it, nyght ne day ?

And eek whan I sey *Ye*, ne sey nat *Nay*,
Neither by word ne frowning contenance :
Swer this, and here I swere our alliance."

161

Wondring upon this word, quaking for drede,
She seyde—"Lord, undigne and unworthy
Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede ;
But, as ye wol yourself, ryght so wol I.

And heer I swere that never willingly
In werk ne thocht I nil yow disobeye,
For to be deed, thogh me were loth to deye."

168

"This is ynogh, Grisilde myn !" quod he.

And forth he goth with a ful sobre chere
Out at the dore, and after that cam she,

And to the peple he seyde in this manere

"This is my wyf," quod he, "that standeth here :
Honoureth hir and loveth hir, I preye,
Whoso me loveth. Ther is namore to seye."

175

And, for that nothing of hir olde gere

She sholde bringe into his hous, he bad
That wommen sholde dispoilen hir ryght there,
Of which thise ladyes were nat ryght glad,

To handle hir clothes wherin she was clad.
 But natheles this mayde, bryght of hewe,
 Fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe. 182

Hir heres han they kembd, that lay untressed
 Ful rudely ; and with hir fingres smale
 A corone on hir heed they han ydressed ;
 And sette hir ful of nowches grete and smale.
 Of hir array what sholde I make a tale ?
 Unnethe the peple hir knew for hir fairnesse,
 Whan she translated was in swich richesse. 189

This markis hath hir spoused with a ring,
 Broght for the same cause ; and than hir sette
 Upon an hors, snow whyt and wel ambling ;
 And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,
 With joyful peple that hir ladde and mette,
 Conveyed hir : and thus the day they spende
 In revel til the sonne gan descende. 196

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,
 I seye that to this newe markisesse
 God hath swich favour sent hir of his grace
 That it ne semed nat by lyklinesse
 That she was born and fed in rudenesse
 As in a cote or in an oxe stalle,
 But norished in an emperoures halle. 203

To every wyght she woxen is so dere
 And worshipful, that folk ther she was bore,
 And from hir birthe knewe hir yeer by yere,
 Unnethe trowed they, but dorste han swore
 That to Janicle, of which I spak bifore,
 She doghter nas, for, as by conjecture,
 Hem thoghte she was another creature. 210

For, thogh that ever vertuous was she,
She was encrested in swich excellence
Of thewes gode, yset in heigh bountee,
And so discreet, and fair of eloquence,
So benigne, and so digne of reverence,
And coude so the peples herte embrace,
That ech hir loved that lokod on hir face. 217

When they had been married a year a daughter was born, and a short time thereafter Walter began to put his wife's patience to the proof. Under pretence that his people were dissatisfied with the prospect of being ruled by the daughter of a peasant girl, he disposed of the infant, as the mother thought, by ordering its destruction: he had, however, given strict orders in secret that the child should be conveyed to his sister, the Countess of Panik, at Bologna, there to be fostered and educated in a manner worthy of its rank as the daughter of the Marquis of Saluzzo.

A son, born four years later, was treated in the same way.

Grisilda bore these trials with perfect patience.

The Marquis, however, was bent upon subjecting her patience to trials not less severe.

After the lapse of years he pretended that his people demanded that he should divorce her, and that a fair and youthful consort, worthy of his rank, was coming, accompanied by her brother and a retinue of lords and ladies, to fill the place of marchioness at the palace of Saluzzo. He accordingly dismissed her, in a dress less seemly than the one she had worn when he first proposed marriage to her in her father's cottage.

Even here his persecution did not cease. When the new bride was just expected at the palace, he sent for Griselda, to receive her and bid her welcome. Griselda's patience bore all these tests; and she was finally rewarded

by being informed that the supposed bride and her brother were none other than her own children, and by being reinstated as Marchioness, a position from which as Walter's wife she had been only fictitiously divorced.

GRISILDE is deed, and eek her pacience,
 And bothe atones buried in Itaille ;
L'envoi de For which I crye, in open audience,
Chaucer. No wedded man so hardy be tassaile
 His wyves pacience in hope to fynde
 Grisildes—for in certain he shal faille. 223

O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,
 Lat noon humilitee your tonge naille ;
 Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence
 To wryte of yow a storie of swich mervaille
 As of Grisildis pacient and kynde,
 Lest Chichevache yow swalwe in hir entraille. 229

Folweth ekko, that holdeth no silence
 But evere answereth at the countretaille ;
 Beth nat bidaffed for your innocence,
 But sharply tak on yow the governaille.
 Emprinteth wel this lesson in your mynde
 For commune profit, sith it may availle. 235

Ye archewyves, stondeth at defence,
 Sin ye be stronge as is a greet camaille ;
 Ne suffreth nat that men yow doon offence.
 And, sklendre wyves, feble as in bataille,
 Beth egre as is a tygre yond in Inde ;
 Ay clappeth as a mille, I yow consaille. 241

Ne dreed hem nat ; do hem no reverence ;
 For, thogh thyn housbonde armed be in maille,

The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
 Shal perce his brest and eek his aventaille ;
 In jalousye I rede eek thou him bynde, 246
 And thou shalt make him couche as doth a quaille.

If thou be fair, ther folk ben in presence
 Shew thou thy visage and thyn apparaille ;
 If thou be foul, be free of thy dispence :
 To gete thee frendes, ay do thy travaille.
 Be ay of chere as lyght as leef on lynde, 252
 And lat him care and wepe and wringe and waille !

NOTES.

5-7. Translate—Housed their beasts, and had their abode, and enjoyed the fruits of their labour.

10, 11. As when Christ was born.

13. *fair ynogh to syghte*. There is no depreciation of her personal beauty, but (see l. 15 *et seqq.*) the charm of her moral beauty was a rarer possession.

17. *For*. Because.

18. No wanton ideas ran riot in her heart.

19. Oftener from the well than from the wine-cask.

21. It is almost proverbial that idleness is the mother of vice.

23, 24. In her girlish breast was a mature and steady mind. Cf. the common expression—"An old head on young shoulders."

33-35. Translate—And she continued to maintain and cheer her father by every act of obedience and attention by which child can honour parent.

47. Accent on *he*, in contradistinction to *the peple* in the preceding line ; and translate—He estimated her goodness at its proper value.

51. Say who the bride was to be.

64. *undern*. Lit., the middle period—of forenoon nine o'clock ; of afternoon three o'clock. Here it is mid-forenoon.

67. Both public room and private rooms, each chamber suitably to the rank of its expected guest.

68. *Houses of office.* Store-rooms.

70. *as fer as last Itaille.* As far as lasteth (extendeth) Italy : within the bounds of Italy.

101. *your fader.* Not *thy*, but the plural form, in honour of Griselda. Notice that in addressing the father, however, he uses the singular form.

103. *al ready here.* Within, at your service. *Al*=quite.

107. *he him hadde asyde.* He took him aside. This use of "had" occurs in Bunyan : "They had him to the top of the house."

109. *the plesance of myn herte.* The desire of my heart.

117. *Tel me that poynt.* Inform or enlighten me on the subject.

118. *unto that purpos drawe.* Incline or accede to the proposal.

131. *reule hir after me.* Conduct herself according to my wishes ; do as I want.

154. *or elles you aryse?* Or else will you think about it ?—meaning refusal. The king's refusal was formally expressed by the words *le roy s'avisera*.

157. *do you laugh or smerte.* Cause you to laugh or grieve ; make you happy or miserable.

163. This line contains an example of bilingualism.

168. *For to be deed.* Even though I were to die—*i.e.*, though obedience should mean death. The Lat. original which Chaucer follows is "*et si me mori jussuris*." The use of three negatives for a strong negative, in ll. 166, 167, is notable.

185. *A corone.* The crown was in honour of the bride, and was emblematic also of the high rank to which she was raised as consort of a reigning marquis.

196. *the sonne gan descende.* The sun set. *Gan*=did, sign of past tense. *Spen* or has the form *can* for *gan*, in the same sense. Coleridge uses *gan* more than once, in the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, in this old sense :—

"The mariners *gan work* the ship,
As they were wont to do."

210. *Hem thought.* Not they thought, but it seemed to them.

216. *the peples herte embrace.* Captivate the hearts of the people.

217. This line recurs in Chaucer.

229. *Chichevache.* Lean cow. The fable tells that Chiche Vache was lean because she could only live by feeding on patient wives—a scarce commodity !

[The Clerk's ironical complaisance in the Envoi was perhaps intended for the ears of the Wife of Bath.]

XIV. FROM THE MERCHANT'S TALE.

THIS is the story of January and May.

A WYF ! a ! Seinte Marie, *bencite !*

How mighte a man han any adversitee

**The Bless-
ing of a
Wife.** That hath a wyf ? Certes, I cannat seye.
The blisse which that is bitwixe hem tweye
Ther may no tonge telle, or herte thinke.

If he be povre, she helpeth him to swinke ;

She kepeth his good, and wasteth never a deel ;

Al that hir housbonde lust hir lyketh weel ;

She seith nat ones *Nay* whan he seith *Ye* ;

Do this, seith he, *Al redy, sir*, seith she. 10

O blisful ordre of wedlok precious,

Thou art so mery, and eek so vertuous,

And so commended and appreveed eek,

That every man, that halt him worth a leek,

Upon his bare knees oghte al his lyf

Thanken his God that him hath sent a wyf,

Or elles preye to God him for to sende

A wyf, to laste unto his lyves ende !

For thanne his lyf is set in sikernesse.

He may nat be deceyved, as I gesse, 20

So that he werke after his wyves reed :

Than may he boldly beren up his heed,

They been so trewe and therwithal so wyse. . . .

Suffre thy wyves tonge, as Caton bit ;
She shal commande, and thou shalt suffren it ;
And yet she wol obeye of curteisye.
A wyf is keper of thyn housbondrye ;
Wel may the syke man biwaille and wepe,
Theras ther nis no wyf the hous to kepe.

NOTES.

8. *Iust.* 3rd pers. sing. present tense. Pleases.

24. *As Caton bit.* As Cato bids. Old Eng. *biddan* means to ask or pray ; and *bodan*, to bid. The two verbs got confused. By Cato is meant Dionysius Cato, who wrote (*circa* fourth century) a Latin work *De Moribus*, which was very popular. Chaucer has several references to this Cato.

XV FROM THE SQUIRE'S TALE.

It is scarcely probable that this tale was of Chaucer's own invention. The original from which he copied has not, however, been found. Most of the magic, which enters so largely into the composition of the story, is familiar to readers of the very ancient and famous collection of stories popularly known as the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*. Some of the descriptions also seem to have been drawn from the *Travels of Marco Polo*. It has further been ingeniously supposed that Chaucer may have heard the story, which, in his Canterbury scheme, he allots to the young knight, from a member of the retinue of an Armenian king whose residence in London in 1385-86 no doubt excited some public curiosity.

The story is unfinished, indeed, it is barely begun. It does not quite reach 700 lines, and it is planned on so extensive a scale that, if finished, it must have at least equalled the *Knight's Tale* in length. Of all Chaucer's narratives, it would seem to have been the one which the youthful Milton most preferred: his reference to it in *Il Penseroso* is known to every one

“Call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride.”

Spenser took up the unfinished tale, and continued it with doubtful success. See *The Faerie Queene*, Bk. IV., from canto ii. stanza 30 on to the end of canto iii.

At Sarray, in the land of Tartarye,

The Story Ther dwelte a king that werreyed Russye,
of Cam- Thurgh which ther deyde many a doughty man.
buscan
Bold. This noble king was cleped Cambiuskan,

Which in his tyme was of so greet renoun
 That ther was nowher in no regioun
 So excellent a lord in alle thing :
 Him lakked noght that longed to a king. . . .

A fair persone he was, and fortunat,
 And keppe alwey so wel royal estat 10
 That ther was nowher swich another man.

This noble king, this Tartre Cambiuskan,
 Hadde two sones on Elpheta, his wyf,
 Of whiche theldeste highte Algarsyf ;
 That other sone was cleped Cambalo.
 A doghter hadde this worthy king also,
 That yongest was, and highte Canacee.
 But for to telle yow al hir beautee
 It lyth nat in my tonge, nin my conning.
 I dar nat undertake so heigh a thing. . . . 20
 No rhetor I ; I moot speke as I can.

And so bifel that, whan this Cambiuskan
 Hath twenty winter born his diademe,
 As he was wont fro yeer to yeer, I deme,
 He leet the feste of his nativitee
 Don cryen thurghout Sarray, his citee,
 The last Idus of March after the yeer.
 Phebus, the sonne, ful joly was and cleer ; . .
 For which the foules agayn the sonne shene,
 What for the sesoun and the yonge grene, 30
 Ful loude songen hir affecciouns :

Hem semed han geten hem protecciouns
Agayn the swerd of winter, kene and cold.

This Cambiuskan, of which I have yow told,
In royal vestiment sit on his deys,
With diademe, ful heighe in his paleys,
And halt his feste so solempne and so riche
That in this world ne was ther noon it liche ;
Of which, if I shal tellen al tharray,
Than wolde it occupye a someres day. . . . 40
Unto my tale I wol have my recours.

And so bifel that, after the thridde cours,
Whyl that this king sit thus in his nobleye,
Herkninge his minstralles hir thinges pleye
Biforn him at the bord deliciously,
In at the halle dore al sodeynly
Ther cam a knyght upon a steede of bras,
And in his hand a brood mirour of glas ;
Upon his thombe he hadde of gold a ring,
And by his syde a naked swerd hanging. 50
And up he rydeth to the heighe bord.

In al the halle ne was ther spoke a word,
For merveille of this knyght : him to biholde
Ful bisily ther wayten yonge and olde.

This strange knyght that cam thus sodeynly
Al armed—save his heed—ful richely,
Salueth king and queen and lordes alle
By ordre, as they seten in the halle ; . . .
And than with manly voys seith his mesage
After the forme used in his langage, 60
Withouten vyce of sillable or of lettre ;

And, for his tale sholde seme the bettre,
 Accordant to his wordes was his chere,
 As techeth art of speche hem that it lere. . . .

If so be that I have his speche in minde,
 He seyde—"The Kyng of Arabie and of Inde,
 My lige Lord, on this solempne day
 Salueth yow, as he best can and may,
 And sendeth yow in honour of your feste,
 By me that am al redy at your heste, 70
 This steede of bras, that esily and wel
 Can, in the space of o day naturel
 (This is to seyn, in foure and twenty houres),
 Wherso yow list, in droghte or elles shoures,
 Beren your body into every place
 To which your herte wilneth for to pace,
 Withouten wem of yow, thurgh foul or fair ;
 Or, if yow list to fleen as hye in the air
 As doth an egle whan him list to sore,
 This same steede shal bere yow evermore 80
 Withouten harm til ye be ther yow leste,
 Though that ye slepen on his bak, or reste ;
 And turne ageyn with wrything of a pin.
 He that it wroghte coude ful many a gin ;
 He wayted many a constellacioun
 Er he had doon this operacioun,
 And knew ful many a seel and many a bond.
 This mirour eek, that I have in myn hond,
 Hath swich a myght that men may in it see
 Whan ther shal fallen any adversitee 90
 Unto your regne or to yourself also,
 And openly who is your frend or fo.
 And over al this, if any lady bright
 Hath set hir herte on any maner wight,

If he be fals, she shal his tresoun see,
His newe love, and al his subtiltee
So openly that ther shal nothing hyde.
Wherefore, ageyn this lusty someres tyde,
This mirour, and this ring that ye may see,
He hath sent to my lady Canacee, 100
Your excellente doghter that is heere.

The vertu of the ring, if ye wol here,
Is this,—that, if hir lust it for to were
Upon hir thombe, or in her purs it bere,
Ther is no foul that fleeth under the hevene
That she ne shal wel understonde his stevene,
And knowe his mening openly and pleyn,
And answeere him in his langage ageyn.
And every gras that groweth upon rote
She shal eek knowe, and whom it wol do bote, 110
Al be his woundes never so depe and wyde.

This naked swerd that hangeth by my syde
Swich vertu hath that, whatso man ye smyte,
Thurghout his armure it wol kerve and byte
Were it as thikke as is a branched ook.
And what man that is wounded with the strook
Shal never be hool til that yow list, of grace,
To stroke him with the platte in thilke place
Ther he is hurt; than wol the wounde close.
This is a verray sooth, withouten glose; 120
It failleth nat whyl it is in your hold."

AND whan this knyght hath thus his tale told,
He rydeth out of halle, and doun he lighte.
His steede, which that shoon as sonne brighte,

Stant in the court as stille as any stoon.
 This knyght is to his chambre lad anoon,
 And is unarmed ; and to mete yset.

The presents been ful royally yfet,
 That is to seyn, the swerd and the mirour,
 And born anon into the heighe tour. 130
 With certeine officers ordeyned therfore ;
 And unto Canacee the ring was bore
 Solempnely ther she sit at the table.
 But sikerly, withouten any fable,
 The hors of bras, that may nat be remewed,
 It stant as it were to the ground yglewed. . . .

Phebus hath laft the angle meridional,
 And yet ascending was the beest royal,
 The gentil Leon, with his Aldiran,
 When that this Tartre king, this Cambiuskan, 140
 Roos fro his bord theras he sat ful hye.
 Toform him gooth the loude minstralceye,
 Til he cam to his chambre of parementz,
 Theras they sownen diverse instrumentz
 That it is lyk an heven for to here.
 Now dauncen lusty Venus children dere,
 For in the Fyssh hir lady sat ful hye
 And loketh on hem with a frendly ye.

This noble king is set upon his trone.
 This strange knyght is fet to him ful sone ; 150
 And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee.
 Than was the revel, and the jolitee ! . . .
 But who coude telle yow the forme of daunces,
 So uncouth, and swich fresshe contenaunces,
 Swich subtil loking and dissimulinges

For drede of jalouse mennes aperceyvinges?
No man but Launcelot ; and he is deed.
Therfor I passe over al this lustiheed ;
I sey namore ; but in this jolinesse
I lete hem, til men to the soper dresse. 160

The styward bit the spyces for to hye,
And eek the wyn, in al this melodye.
The usshers and the squyers been ygon ;
The spyces and the wyn is come anon.
They ete and drinke, and, whan this hadde an ende,
Unto the temple, as reson was, they wende.

The service doon, they soupen al by day.
What nedeth yow rehercen hir array ?
Ech man ful wel wot that a kinges feste
Hath plentee to the moste and to the leste, 170
And deyntees mo than been in my knowing.
At after soper gooth this noble king
To seen this hors of bras, with al the route
Of lordes and of ladyes him aboute. . . .
And fynally the king axeth this knyght
The vertu of this courser, and the myght,
And preyde him to telle his governaunce.
This hors anon bigan to trippe and daunce
Whan that this knyght leyde hand upon his reyne ;
He seyde—"Sire, ther is namore to seyne 180
But, whan yow list to ryden anywhere,
Ye mooten trille a pin stant in his ere,
Which I shal telle yow betwix us two.
Ye moote nempne him to what place also,
Or to what contree, that yow list to ryde ;
And, whan ye come theras yow list tabyde,
Bidde him descende, and trille another pin

(For therin lyth theeffect of al the gin),
 And he wol down descende and doon your wille,
 And in that place he wol abyde stille." 190

Enformed whan the king was of that knyght,
 And hath conceyved in his wit aryght
 The manere and the forme of al this thing,
 Ful glad and blythe this noble doughty king
 Repeireth to his revel as biforn.
 The brydel is unto the tour yborn,
 And kept among his jewels leve and dere ;
 The hors vanissed, I noot in what manere,
 Out of hir syghte : ye gete namore of me ;
 But thus I lete in lust and jolitee 200
 This Cambiuskan his lordes festeyinge
 Til wel ny that the day bigan to springe.

NOTES.

1. *Sarray, in the land of Tartarye.* Sarai, identified with Tsarev, now an insignificant place on the lower Volga, in the S.E. of Russia. At the time of the great Tartar invasion of Russia, in the thirteenth century, it became a city of great fame as the seat of Batu Khan, grandson of Gengis Khan. The Caspian was long named from it the Sea of Sarai. Professor Skeat notes that "Chaucer has here confused two accounts. There were two celebrated Khans, both grandsons of Gengis Khan, who were ruling about the same time. Batu Khan held his court at Sarai, and ruled over the S.E. of Russia; but the Great Khan, named Kublai, held his court at Cambaluc, the modern Peking, in a still more magnificent manner. And it is easy to see that, although Chaucer *names* Sarai, his description really *applies to* Cambaluc."

1. *Cambiuskan.* Chaucer's corrupt form of Gengis Khan; which again Milton corrupts into Cambuscan, shifting the accent to the middle syllable. It is, of course, the magnificence of Kublai Khan

and his court in far Cathay that fills Chaucer's imagination, though he speaks of Gengis Khan and Sarai.

25, 26. *He leet the feste . . . Don cryen.* He ordered the proclamation of the festival; lit., he allowed (his officers) to cause to cry the feast—i.e., his officers, with his permission, saw that the proclamation was made.

27. *the last Idus of March.* March 15, the Ides.

after the year. According to the year or calendar—i.e., to give the date.

29. *the foules agayn the sonne shene.* The birds basking in the bright sun: not sunshine; *shene* is an adj. Chaucer, however, has "sonne-beem."

35. *sit.* Sitteth. So *halt*, two lines below, for holdeth.

72. *o day naturel.* Explained in the next line as twenty-four hours, a complete revolution (rotation). The day artificial was the period from sunrise to sunset, which, of course, is a varying quantity.

84. *gin.* Ingenious contrivance; engine.

85. *wayted.* Watched. The reference is to the old astrological belief in lucky moments for the commencement of any work of importance. The lucky moment was known from the position of certain stars, a position which was eagerly watched for.

87. By which, probably, he compelled the aid of supernatural agents.

98. *ageyn this lusty someres tyle.* For this pleasant summer-time; or in expectation of it.

110. *whom it wol do bote.* To whom it will do good. *For bote ne bale*=for neither good nor ill.

137. The expression "angle meridional" is a technical term of astrology. The statement is that it was now at least past midday.

139. Aldiran is a star in the sign of Leo. Leo, on the 15th of March in Chaucer's time, and in the latitude of London, began to ascend above the horizon just about noon, and by about two P.M. had so far ascended that Aldiran was now also rising. Prof. Skeat calculates that "by the time the *whole* of the sign (Leo) had ascended, it would be about a quarter to three." Aldiran has been identified as a star in the forepaws of the Lion. The time when Cambiusean rose from table, therefore, was not less than two o'clock after noon, and not more than, say, half-past two.

142. Cf. Coleridge (*The Ancient Mariner*)—

"Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsie."

146. *Venus children.* Lovers; or, simply, young people—knights and ladies at the feast.

147. The constellation of this name. The influence of love was believed to be greatest when the planet Venus was in the sign of Pisces. *sat ful hye*. Was in her exaltation *i.e.*, where she exerted her utmost influence.

154. *So uncouth*. Quaint, strange, unknown in England.

157. *Launcelot*. One of the famous knights of King Arthur's Round Table; a prince of chivalry and gallantry.

161. *bit the spyces for to hye*. Bids, or gives orders, to hurry up with the spices or condiments. A small collation of confections and wine is meant; then followed a short religious service; then supper, which lasted from before sunset till nearly sunrise.

182. Lit., Ye must turn a pin (that) stands in his ear. The omission of the relative in the nom. case is not common, even in poetry. Cf. Scott's *Eve of St John*—

“There is a monk in Melrose tower,
Ne'er looks upon the sun”;

And Burns's *Tam o' Shanter*—

“Pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower—its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow, falls in the river—
A moment white, then lost for ever.”

183. *betwix us two*. Privately; *entre nous*.

XVI. FROM THE FRANKLIN'S TALE.

THIS was, as the bokes me remembre,

Christmas The colde frosty seson of Decembre.

in the Phebus wex old and hewed lyk latoun,—

Olden Time. That in his hote declinacioun

Shoon as the burned gold with streimes brighte ;

But now in Capricorn adoun he lighte,

Wheras he shoon ful pale I dar wel seyn.

The bittre frostes with the sleet and reyn

Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.

Janus sit by the fyr with double berd,

10

And drinketh of his buglehorn the wyn ;

Biforn him stant braun of the tusked swyn ;

And *Nowel* ! cryeth every lusty man.

NOTES.

1. *me remembre*. Remind me. For scansion, accent on *This*.

3. *hewed lyk latoun*. Of the colour of latten, a metal compound, containing copper and zinc. The Pardoner carried a cross of latoun adorned with (counterfeit) precious stones (see Prologue *The Pardoner*). The sun in December, seen through frosty mist, seems "shorn of his beams," of a dull copper colour.

4, 5. "That in the middle of summer (at the summer solstice, shone with flaming beams." For a description of the summer sun in con-

trast with the sun of mid-winter, see *The Merchant's Tale* (l. 975 *et seqq.*)—

“Bright was the day, and blew the firmament ;
 Phebus of gold his stremes down hath sent
 To gladen every flour with his warminesse.
 He was that tyme in Gemini, as I gesse,
 But litel fro his declinacioun
 Of Cancer, Jovis exaltacioun.”

Note declinatioun=angular distance N. from the equator.

6. *in Capricorn.* The sun is in this sign of the zodiac in the latter part of December and the earlier part of January : the winter solstice.

10. Janus is represented with two faces, because, as the god of gates, he looked both ways—out and in : hence “Janus bifrons.” January, as opening the year, is called after him.

13. *Noel!* Fr. *noël* ; Lat. *natalis dies* : Christmas, or the cry in a Christmas carol. Janus is mentioned as Christmas is near January. [Christmas is now held in January in some parts of the rural districts where Old Style still obtains.]

XVII. FROM THE MANCIPLE'S TALE.

TAK any brid, and put it in a cage,

Natural And do al thyn entente and thy corage
inclina- To fostre it tendrely, with mete and drinke
tion. Of alle deyntees that thou canst bithinke,

And kepe it al so clenly as thou may :

Although his cage of gold be never so gay,

Yet hath this brid, by twenty thousand fold,

Lever in a forest that is rude and cold

Gon ete wormes and swich wrecchednesse.

For ever this brid wol doon his bisinesse

10

To escape out of his cage, if that he may ;

His libertee the brid desireth ay.

Lat take a cat, and fostre him wel with milk

And tendre flesh, and make his couche of silk ;

And lat him seen a mous go by the wal :

Anon he weyveth milk and flesh and al,

And every deyntee that is in that hous,—

Swich appetyt hath he to ete a mous.

FOR that a tyrant is of gretter might,

Captain or By force of meynee for to sleen dounright, 20

Thief. And bredden hous and hoorn, and make al plain,—

Lo ! therfor is he cleped a capitain ;

And, for the outlawe hath but smal meynnee,
 And may not doon so greet an harm as he,
 Ne bringe a contree to so greet mescheef,—
 Men clepen him an outlawe or a theef.

NOTES.

1-12. Adapted from Boethius (*De Consol. Phil.*, Bk. III. met. 2). See *The Squire's Tale*, ll. 612-617, for another version of the same argument.

2. *do al thyn entente and thy corage*. Do your utmost; all that is in your mind and heart—*i.e.*, in your power.

4. Cf. "Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke" (Prologue—*The Franklin*).

9. *ete . . . wrecchednesse*. Eat wretched fare (such as worms, &c.)

10. *wol doon his bisinesse*. Will do his utmost, make it his constant endeavour. Cf. "Do thy diligence"—an expression which occurs both in Chaucer and in the Authorised Version of the Bible.

15. *a mous go by the wal*. Picturesque presentation of a timid venture.

18. The cat will "after kind," act according to natural inclination.

20. *meynee*. Lit., household—*i.e.*, retinue of servants; Old Fr. *maisonne*. Here the word means followers, or men.

sleen downright. Slay openly and without hesitation.

21. *make al plain*. Lay waste everywhere, despoil. Cf. Dunbar (*The Petition of the Gray Horse*)—

"I haif run lang furth in the feild
 On pastouris that ar plane and peild."

22, 26. Cf. Shakespeare (*Measure for Measure*): "What in the captain's but a choleric word," &c.

PART II.

THE MINOR POEMS

THE MINOR POEMS.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

ONE of the most popular and characteristic poems of medieval times was the French allegorical romance of *The Rose*, the greatest work of its kind of the thirteenth century. It was the production of two *trouvères* of very different tone and temper, both belonging to the Loire district of central France, and writing the one at an interval of about forty years after the other. To the earlier poet, Guillaume de Lorris, belongs the honour of the original conception of the poem, as well as the composition of over four thousand lines, or about one-fifth of the entire work. The subject is love, the form intricately allegorical, and the treatment serious, chivalrous, and poetically charming. After the death of William of Lorris, Jean de Meung (Jean Clopinel) took up the scheme, sometime towards the end of the century, and completed the allegory, but in a satirical spirit, the combined wit and wickedness of which, while it effectually broke with the poetical charm of the earlier part, rendered the work as a whole ever so much more popular and generally enjoyable.

Chaucer, born about a century after the composition of the first of its component parts, could not fail, what with his personal predilections, his private studies, and his position at Court, to feel the full influence of the great French poetical masterpiece. It is no exaggeration to say that his youth was steeped in its sensuous beauty and dreamy symbolism. If the *Faerie Queene* made Cowley a poet, still more truly was Chaucer made a poet by the *Roman de la Rose*. Its spirit animates more or less

nearly all that he wrote. But indeed its influence as a model or a source of varied inspiration can be traced for at least two centuries through the whole body of both French and English poetry. Chaucer's studious admiration of it first showed itself in a practical way in his youthful translation of a large portion of it into English octosyllabics. To this translation, and more pointedly to that part of it which deals with the satire of Jean de Meung, there is direct reference in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, where Cupid, addressing the poet, declares—

“Thou art my mortal fo, and me warreyest,
 And of myne olde servaunts thou missayest,
 And hinderest hem, with thy translacioun,
 And lettest ¹ folk to han devocioun ¹ hinderest
 To serven me, and haldest hit folye
 To troste on me. Thou mayst hit nat denye,
 For in plain text, hit nedeth nat to glose,
 Thou hast translated the Romauns of the Rose.”

Only one manuscript authority of the English *Rose* is believed to exist. It is known as the Glasgow MS., and, except by philological critics, is generally supposed to be a copy of Chaucer's translation. It consists of three fragments, of which the first, numbering only 1700 lines or so, is all that Dr Skeat, applying a formal test, can fairly allow as Chaucer's work. From this admittedly genuine portion of Chaucer's translation of the *Rose* of William of Lorris the following extracts are taken. They will serve as specimens of Chaucer's art as a versifier when he was about twenty-five years of age. But the whole of the work may have occupied his pen from time to time for several years both before and after 1365.

Some outline of William of Lorris's courtly romance may be serviceable. Chaucer's version of it is close enough to be regarded as a translation. He preserves the metre of the original iambic octosyllabics, rimed in couplets. The story is supposed to be told by the poet in his twenty-fifth year, but refers to a series of incidents which happened in a dream when he was twenty.

He dreamt it was a morn of May, and that he rose early and strolled forth into the open country, charmed by the radiance

**The
Romance
of William
of Lorris.**

of the risen sun and the singing of song-birds. The sound of running water drew his footsteps to a fair river in which, while he stooped to bathe hands and face, he saw the channel-pebbles flashing through the clear water. Then, following the river in its course onwards, he came to a high-walled park in a spacious meadow, and searched—vainly at first for an entrance. On the outside of the wall he passed in succession graven or painted figures representing Hate, Felony, Villainy, Covetousness, Avarice, Envy, Sorrow, Old Age, Pope-holy (or Hypocrisy), and Poverty. These melancholy images without the guarded enclosure were a complete contrast to the gay company within. At last the poet (or Lover, as he is now called) finds a small wicket in the wall, and knocks, and listens, and knocks again impatiently for entrance. Suddenly, but after some delay, the postern is opened from within, and young yellow-haired Idleness appears in the opening. In answer to Lover's questions she informs him of herself—her name, her nature, and her duties; of the owner of the park, Sir Mirth by name; and how he was at that moment solacing himself and his chosen friends with song and dance among the bowery hollows of the garden. The announcement is as good as an invitation to Lover: he will enter, and no frowning image on the outer wall shall warn him against it.

Entering, therefore, Lover finds himself in a veritable earthly paradise. A pathway on the right hand leads him through mint and "fennel green" to where Sir Mirth and his gay companions, looking like "angels feathered bright," dance to the singing of Lady Gladness. Courtesy invites Lover to take part in the dance, which he does with infinite zest; and while thus engaged he has time to look around him and survey the scene and the company in which he finds himself. Among the rest he regards with particular interest Cupid and his attendant Sweet-Looking. The latter, he observes, carries in each hand five arrows—in the right Beauty, Simplicity, Frankness, Companionship, and Fair-Seeming; in the left Pride, Misconduct, Shame, Suspicion, and Inconstancy.

By-and-by Lover detaches himself from the dancers, and sets forth on his own account on a tour through the garden. Cupid and his arrow-bearing bachelor follow at a distance and watch his movements. By-and-by, while Lover is bending over

a rosebush, one bud of which is the object of his special desire. Cupid shoots at and wounds him with the five golden arrows, then, leaping in upon him, demands his surrender. Lover yields, and learns from his captor what submission means. Cupid then vanishes, and Lover is left helpless and woe-begone. His desire for the coveted Rosebud survives his inability to reach it. Presently comes to him Bel-Acueil or Bialacoil, the son of Courtesy, by whose aid the young Rose is almost reached, when upstarts Danger, before whom Bialacoil flees, and by whom Lover is turned out of the garden.

Reason comes to the disconsolate Lover, but she fails to console him. He then remembers a faithful friend, and is comforted by the friend's sympathy and advice. Pity and Frankness also plead Lover's cause with Danger, who so far relents as to permit Bialacoil's return to Lover, and Lover's return to the Rosebush. And at last, by grace of Venus, Lover kisses the Rose.

But after calm comes trouble. Shame and Wicked-Tongue, guardians of the Rose, are alarmed, and Danger has all his suspicions aroused. The consequence is that Bialacoil is shut up in a garrisoned tower, and Lover is shut out from the Rosebush by a trench which Jealousy digs around it.

THAT it was May thus dremed me,
 In tyme of love and jolitee,
Dream of That al thing ginneth waxen gay ;
an Earthly For ther is neither busk nor hay
Paradise.
 In May that it nil shrouded been,
 And it with newe leves wreen.

These wodes eek recoveren grene
 That drye in winter been to sene ;
 And therthe wexeth proud withalle
 For swote dewes that on it falle,
 And doth the povre estat forgette
 In which that winter hadde it sette ;
 And than bicomth the ground so proud

That it wol have a newe shroud,
 And maketh so queynt his robe and faire
 That it hath hewes an hundred paire
 Of gras and floures, inde and pers,
 And many hewes ful divers. . . .

The briddes, that han left hir song
 Whyl they han suffred cold so strong 20
 In wedres grille, and derk to sighte,
 In May ben for the sunne bryghte
 So glade they shewe in hir singing
 That in hir herte is swich liking
 They mote singen and be light.
 Than doth the nightingale hir night
 To make noyse and singen blythe ;
 Than to is blisful, many a sythe,
 The chelaundre and the papingay.
 Than yonge folk entenden ay 30
 For to ben gay and amorous,
 The time is than so savorous.
 Hard is his herte that loveth nought
 In May when al this mirth is wrought,
 When he may on these braunches here
 The smale briddes singen clere
 Hir blisful swete song pitous.
 And in this sesoun delitous,
 Whan love affrayeth alle thing,
 Methoughte anight, in my sleping, 40
 Right in my bed, ful redily,
 That it was by the morowe erly,
 And up I roos and gan me clothe ;
 Anon I wissh my handes bothe ;
 A sylvre nedle forth I drogh
 Out of an aguiler queynt ynogh,

And gan this nedle threde anon ;
For out of toun me list to gon
The soun of briddes for to here
That in thise buskes singen clere. 50
And in the swete sesoun that leef is,
With a threde basting my sleeves,
Aloon I wente in my playing,
The smale foules song harkning,
That peyned hem ful many a paire
To singe on bowes blosmed faire.
Jolif and gay, ful of gladnesse,
Toward a river I gan me dresse
That I herd renne faste by,
For fairer playing non saugh I 60
Than playen me by that river ;
For from an hille that stod ther neer
Cam down the streem ful stif and bold.
Cleer was the water and as cold
As any welle is, sooth to seyne ;
And somdel lasse it was than Seine,
But it was straighter wel away.
And never saugh I, er that day,
The water that so wel lyked me ;
And wonder glad was I to see 70
That lusty place and that riveer ;
And with that water that ran so cleer
My face I wissh. Tho saugh I wel
The botme paved everydel
With gravel, ful of stones shene.
The medwe softe, swote, and grene
Beet right upon the waterside.
Ful cleer was than the morowtide,
And ful attempre, out of drede.
Tho gan I walke through the mede 80

Dounward ay in my pleying,
The riverside costeying.

And whan I had a while goon
I saugh a gardin right anoon,
Ful long and brood, and everydel
Enclos aboute and walled wel
With hye walles embatailled,
Portrayed without and wel entailed
With many riche portraitures
Of bothe images and peyntures, . . . 90
With gold and asure overalle
Depeynted newe upon the walle.
Tho gan I go a ful gret pas
Envyroning even in compas
The closing of the square wal,
Til that I fond a wiket smal,
So shet that I ne mighte in goon,
And other entree was ther noon.

Upon this dore I gan to smyte
That was so fetys and so lyte, 100
For other wey coude I not seke.
Ful iong I shoof and knocked eke,
And stood ful long and oft herkning
If that I herde a wight coming ;
Til that the dore of thilke entree
A mayden curteys opened me. . . .

And whan I was therin, ywis,
Myn herte was ful glad of this,
For wel wende I ful sikerly
Have been in paradys erthly. 110

FUL fair was Mirthe, ful yong and high ;
A fairer man I never sigh.

Portrait of As round as appel was his face,
Mirth. Ful rody and whyt in every place.

Fetys he was, and wel beseye,
With metely mouth and yen greye,
His nose by mesure wrought ful right,
And crisp his heer and eek ful bright,
His shuldres of a large brede
And smalish in the girdilstede. 120

He semed lik a portreiture,
So noble he was of his stature,
So fair, so joly, and so fetys,
With lymes wrought at poynt devys,
Deliver, smert, and of gret might,
Ne sawe thou never man so light.
Of berde unnethe hadde he nothing,
For it was in the firste spring.

Ful yong he was, and mery of thought ;
And in samyt, with briddes wrought, 130
And with gold beten fetisly,
His body was clad ful richely.

Wrought was his robe in straunge gyse
And al to-slitered for queyntyse
In many a place, lowe and hye.

And shod he was with greet maistrye,
With shoon decoped, and with laas.

By druerye and by solas
His leef a rosen chapelet
Had maad, and on his heed it set. 140

NOTES.

1. *dremed me*. I dreamt.

4. *busk nor hay*. Bush nor hedge. Cf. ambushade with ambush; Fr. *bois* is cognate; Milton (*Comus*) has "bosky" for bushy. Hedge and haw (in hawthorn) are cognate with "hay" as used here; from Old Eng. *haga*, an enclosure or yard, named from the fence round it.

5, 6. *that it nil*, &c. Which will not be clad and cover itself with new leaves.

16. *an hundred paire*. A hundred varieties or shades (sets).

17. *inde and pers*. Of Indian and Persian hues—i.e., indigo or dark blue, and light blue. The Doctor's clothes (see Prologue to *The Tales*) were crimson and "pers."

21. *wedres grille and derk to sighte*. Rough and dull weather. Grille is horrible.

24. *liking*. Pleasure. "Fredome mayss man to haiff liking" (Barbour—*The Brus*).

25. *light*. Lightsome.

29. *chalaundre and the papingay*. The chalaundre is a variety of the lark (*Alanda calandra*); it is mentioned several times in *The Romaunt of the Rose* along with lark or laverock, but so also is thrush or throstle with mavis. The papingay, or popinjay, usually means the parrot; lit., the talking cock, from the imitative *pappel* (babble) and Old Fr. *gau*; Lat. *gall-us*, a cock. Here the papingay means the green woodpecker (Skeat). Papejay is the common spelling in Chaucer's later poems: January (in *The Merchant's Tale*) sang "ful merrier than the papejay."

32. *savourous*. Pleasant (Lat. *sapere*, to taste). The Harleian MS. gives "faverous," favourable.

39. *love affrayeth alle thing*. Love disturbs or distracts every creature.

52. "An odd but not unusual mediæval pastime was sewing stitches in the sleeve" (Prof. Saintsbury—*Flourishing of Romance*). It probably means fastening his sleeve by lacing it up with a bodkin.

58. *gan me dressc*. Directed my steps. Dress (address) and direct are doublets.

60, 61. "For I saw no fairer sport than to play (amuse myself) beside the river."

67. *straighter wel away*. Much more expanded.

77. *Bect right upon*. Closely adjoined or bordered; lit., beat.

79. *ful attempre, out of drede*. Quite mild, indeed.

82. *costeyng*. Coasting. Lat. *costa*, a rib; Fr. *côte*.

87. *embatailled*. Furnished with battlements, alternate merlon and embrasure. (See the description of Chaunticleer's comb in the *Nun's Priest's Tale*.)

88. *Portrayed without and wel entailed*. Painted in fresco on the outside and finely carved in intaglio. Fr. *tailler*, to cut from which our words tailor, tally, retail, &c., is from Lat. *talus*, a twig, slip, or cutting.

93. "Then went I at a pretty quick pace." *Gan* (past tense of *ginne* to begin) is often a mark of the past tense equal to *did* of the verb following. *Can* is a common form for *gan* in *The Faerie Queene*. Coleridge and Scott have *gan* in the antique sense of *did*—

"The mariners gan work the ship."

—*The Ancient Mariner*.

"Around gan Marmion wildly stare."

—*Marmion*.

94, 95. "Going in circuit right round the boundary." *Even*=regularly, exactly.

98. Cf. Milton's description of the Garden of Eden in the Fourth Book of *Paradise Lost*—"One gate there only was" (l. 178).

101. *seke*. Seek; find by seeking; see.

110. *Have been*. To have been. He quite thought he was in the earthly Paradise. It was here, probably, that William Morris found the title for his well-known poem.

112. *never sigh*. Never saw. The *gh* remains in sight.

115. Well-formed he was and good-looking. *wel besceye*=well beseen; fair to see.

116. *yen greye*. Gray eyes. Gray was the favourite colour, down to Shakespeare's time. See the portrait of Madame Eglantine in the Prologue to *The Tales*; and Julia's eyes (in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*) were, like the lady Prioress's, "gray as glass."

120. *the girdilstede*. The waist (where the girdle is fastened).

124. *wrought at poynt devys*. Fashioned to perfection; lit., wrought in exact fashion, with utmost exactness.

125. Cf. the description of the Squire in the Prologue to *The Tales*, "Wonderly deliver and gret of strengthe." The later word *clever* is merely a corruption of *deliver*, which (as a Fr. adj., *deliver*) means free, nimble, active.

130. *in samyt with briddes wrought*. Robed in samite (a rich glossy silk) embroidered with birds. The Squire's gown in the Prologue was embroidered with flowers. Samite means, lit., cloth woven with six kinds of thread Gr. *hex*, six; and *mitos*, a thread of the shuttle or

woof. Tennyson, in the *Idylls of the King* (The Passing of Arthur), has familiarised the word samite to modern readers—

“Rose an arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,” &c.

134. *to-slitred for qucyntyse*. Slashed for ornament. The prefix *to-* is intensive.

136, 137. “He was shod with great elegance, his shoes being laced and cut in open-work patterns.”

138-140. “From affection and playfulness his lady-love had made for him a chaplet of roses, and set it on his head.”

THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS.

THE *Book of the Duchess* is one of the longer minor poems, and consists of 1334 lines of octosyllabic verse rhiming in couplets. It falls naturally into three parts of very unequal length—the Proem, of 290 lines; the Dream, of 1033; and a somewhat abrupt Conclusion of 11. The Proem, with the Conclusion, constitutes the framework of the poem proper, and contains some interesting autobiographical matter. It begins with a pathetic reference to a mysterious insomnia from which the poet had now suffered for eight years, and of which there is but one physician that can heal him. The date of the poem is definitely fixed by the subject: the death of Blanche of Lancaster, wife of John of Gaunt, took place towards the end of 1369, and the poem, which commemorates that event, was in all probability produced before the year was out. Chaucer was then in his thirtieth year, but whether married or unmarried is matter of some doubt. Some have supposed that the sleeplessness from which he suffered was the consequence of a hopeless passion for an unknown lady; others with more discernment trace it to the unhappiness of his married life. The date casts no light on the question. Beyond the fact and the effect of his misery, all information on the subject which the poet offers is contained in the lines—

“Men mighte axe me why so
I may not slepe, and what me is?
But, natheles, who aske this
Leseth his asking trewely.
Myselfen cannot telle why
The sooth; but trewely, as I gesse,
I holde hit be a siknesse
That I have suffred this eight yere,
And yet my bote is never the nere;

For ther is phisicien but oon
 That may me hele ; but that is doon.
 Passe we over until eft ;
 That wil not be moot nede be left."

Reading, the resource of the sleepless, was his ; and one night the book which an attendant reached him happened to be a collection of fables or romances. One of these soon engrossed his attention. It was the story (told by Ovid in the Eleventh Book of the *Metamorphoses*—probably Machault's French translation) of Ceyx and Alcyone. The poet read of their mutual affection and happy married life ; of the husband's perilous voyage, and death by shipwreck—

"Soche a tempest gan to ryse
 That brak hir mast and made it falle,
 And clefte hir ship, and dreinte hem alle,
 That never was founden (as it telles)
 Bord, ne man, ne nothing elles"—

how Alcyone, left at home, waited long but vainly for her lord's return ; how at last, by favour of Morpheus, the god of Sleep, the tragedy of her husband-lover's death was revealed to her in a dream ; and how, within three days after the revelation, she died of sorrow for his sake. At this point of the narrative the poet ceased to read, and fell into a reverie in which were subtly blended the images of Morpheus and Alcyone, and from which, in happy forgetfulness of his own misery, he gradually sank into a slumber that brought with it the vision of a new world and the mingled happiness and woe of other men.

ME mette thus, that hit was May,
 And in the dawning, as I lay, . .
The Methoughte I herde an hunte blowe
Man in Tassaye his horn, and for to knowe
Black.
 Whether hit were clere or hors of soun.
 And I herde goinge, up and doune,
 Men, hors, houndes and other thing,
 And alle men spoken of hunting,—

How they wolde slee the hert with strengthe,
 And how the hert had upon lengthe 10
 So moche embosed,—I not now what.

Anonright whan I herde that,
 How that they wolde on hunting goon,
 I was right glad, and up anoon
 And took my hors, and forth I went
 Out of my chambre; I never stente
 Til I com to the feld withoute,
 Ther overtook I a gret route
 Of huntres and eek of foresteres,
 With many relayes and lymeres, 20
 That hyed hem to the forest faste,
 And I with hem. So, at the laste,
 I axed oon ladde a lymere—
 "Say, felow! who shal hunte here?"
 Quod I; and he answerde ageyn—
 "Sir, themperour Octovien,"
 Quod he; "and is heer faste by."
 "A Goddes halfe, in good tyme," quod I;
 "Go we faste!" and gan to ryde.

Whan we comen to the forest syde 30
 Every man dide right anon
 As to hunting fil to don.
 The mayster hunte anon, fot hoot,
 With a gret horne blew three moot
 At the uncoupling of his houndes.
 Within a whyl the hert yfounde is,
 Yhalowed, and rechased faste
 A longe tyme; and, at the laste,
 This hert rused and stal away
 Fro alle the houndes a prevy way : 40

The houndes had overshote hem alle,
 And were on a defaute yfalle.
 Therwith the hunte, wonder faste,
 Blew a forloyn at the laste.

I was go walked fro my tree,
 And, as I wente, ther cam by me
 A whelp, that fauned me as I stood,
 That hadde yfolowed, and coude no good.
 Hit com and creep to me as lowe
 Right as hit hadde me yknowe, 50
 Hild down his heed, and joyned his eres,
 And leyde al smothe down his heres.
 I wolde han caught hit ; and anon
 Hit fledde, and was fro me gon,
 And I him folwed. And hit forth wente
 Doun by a floury grene wente
 Ful thikke of gras, ful softe and swete
 With floures fele, faire under fete ;
 And ther were many grene greves
 Ful thikke of trees so ful of leves, 60
 And every tree stood by himselve
 Fro other wel ten foot or twelve,—
 So grete trees, so huge of strengthe,
 Of fourty, fifty fadme lengthe,
 Clene withoute bough or stikke,
 With croppes brode and eek as thikke—
 They were nat an inche asonder—
 That hit was overal shadwe under. . . .

So, at the laste,
 I was war of a man in blak 70
 That sat, and had yturned his bak
 To an oke, an huge tree.

"Lord!" thoghte I, "who may that be?
 What ayleth him to sitten here?"
 Anoonright I wente nere.
 Than fond I sitte, even upright,
 A wonder welfaringe knight—
 By the maner methoughte so—
 Of good mochel, and yong therto,
 Of the age of four and twenty yeer, 80
 Upon his berde but little heer,
 And he was clothed al in blakke.

I stalked even unto his bakke,
 And ther I stood as stille as ought,
 That, sooth to saye, he saw me nought,
 Forwhy he heng his heed adoune;
 And with a deedly sorwful soun
 He made of ryme ten vers or twelve
 Of a compleynt unto himselfe: . . .
 Hit was a lay, a maner song 90
 Withoute note, withoute song,
 And hit was this:—

I.

*I have of sorwe so gret woon
 That joye gete I never noon
 Now that I see my lady bright,
 Which I have loved with al my might,
 Is fro me deed, and is agoon!*

II.

*Allas, O Deth! what ayleth thee?
 That thou noldest have taken me
 Whan that thou tooke my lady swete,* 100

*That was so fayr, so fresh, so free,
So good that men right wel may see
Of al goodnesse she had no mete.*

When he had mad thus his complaynte,
And gan with sorwe faste faynte, . . .
And ferde thus evel ther he sete,
I wente and stood right at his fete,
And grette him ; but he spak noght,
But argued with his owne thoght ; . . .
For he had wel nigh lost his minde, 110
Thogh Pan, that men clepe God of kinde,
Were for his sorwes never so wrooth.
But, at the laste, to sayn right sooth,
He was war of me, how I stood
Before him and dide of myn hood
And grette him as I best coude.
Debonairly, and nothing loude,
He sayde—"I prey thee, be not wrooth ;
I herde thee not, to sayn the sooth,
Ne I saw thee not, sir, trewely." 120

"A ! goode sir, no fors," quod I ;
I am right sory if I have ought
Destroubled yow out of your thought :
Foryive me if I have mistake."

"Yis, thamendes is light to make,"
Quoth he, "for ther lyth noon therto :
Ther is no thing missayd nor do."

Lo how goodly spak this knight,
As it had been another wight, . . .

As methoughte, for al his bale !
 Anoonright I gan finde a tale
 To him, to loke wher I might ought
 Have more knowing of his thought.
 "Sir," quod I, "this game is doon ;
 I holde that this hert be goon.
 Thise hunttes conne him nowher see."

130

"I do no fors therof," quod he ;
 "My thought is theron never a del."

"By our Lord," quod I, "I trow yow wel ;
 Right so methinketh by your chere.
 But, sir, oo thing wol ye here ?
 Methinketh in gret sorwe I yow see.
 But, certes, sir, yif that ye
 Wolde ought discure me your wo,
 I wolde, as wis God helpe me so !
 Amende hit, yif I can or may.
 Ye mowe preve hit by assay. . . .
 Telleth me of your sorwes smerte ;
 Paraventure hit may ese your herte." . .

140

He loked "nay ! that wol not be."
 "Graunt mercy, gode frend," quod he ;
 "I thanke thee that thou woldest so,
 But hit may never the rather be do.
 No man may my sorwe glade,
 That maketh my hewe to falle and fade,
 And hath myn understanding lorn,
 That me is wo that I was born. . .
 And whoso wiste al, by my trouthe,
 My sorwe, but he hadde routhe

150

And pitee of my sorwes smerte— 160
That man hath a fendly herte.
For whoso seeth me first on morwe
May seyn he hath ymet with Sorwe ;
For I am Sorrow, and Sorrow is I
Allas ! and I wol telle thee why.”

Thereupon he proceeds to inform the poet, but at first only vaguely, of a great misfortune that has befallen him. In the language of metaphor, he has played a game at chess with Fortune, and the crafty goddess by an unexpected move has taken his queen (his “fers”) and checkmated him with a stray pawn. The poet reminds him that Socrates did not care three straws for anything that Fortune could do, and that the loss of a fers scarcely justified the great lamentation he was making. But the mourner retorts upon the too literal poet—

“Thou wost ful litel what thou menest ;
I have lost more than thou wenest.”

The poet asks for enlightenment, and is invited to sit down and listen to the whole long story of the mourner's sorrow. It is a love story to begin with. From his first youth the narrator had felt and cherished the passion of love for beauty in general, but at last one day he found a fitting object of his entire and most ardent affections in the person of a young lady, the fairest of a fair company such as had never before been seen together in one place. The beauty of her face and of her figure, the gracefulness of her movements, her gracious manner, her cheerfulness of disposition, and the goodness of her nature captivated him at once. His heart told him at first glance that “to serve her for

nothing were better than to stand well with any other." He thus recalls the freshness of her early charms :—

I saw hir dance so comlily,
 Carole and sing so swetely,
 Laughe and playe so womanly,
 And loke so debonairly,
 So goodly speke and so frendly, 170
 That, certes, I trow that evermore
 Nas seyn so blisful a tresore.
 For every heer upon hir hede,
 Soth to seyn hit was not rede,
 Ne nouthur yelow, ne broun hit nas ;
 Methoghte most lyk gold hit was.
 And whiche eyen my lady hadde !
 Debonair, goode, glade, and sadde,
 Simple, of good mochel, noght to wyde ;
 Therto hir look nas not asyde 180
 Ne overthwart, but beset so wel
 Hit drew and took up everydel
 Alle that on hir gan biholde.
 Hir eyen semed anoon she wolde
 Have mercy : fooles wenden so ;
 But hit was never the rather do.
 Hit nas no countrefeted thing,
 It was her owne pure loking
 That the goddesse, Dame Nature,
 Had made hem opene by mesure 190
 And close ; for, were she never so glad,
 Hir loking was not foly sprad
 Ne wildely, thogh that she pleyde ;
 But ever, methoughte, hir eyen seyde—
 "Pardee, my wrathe is al foryive."
 Therwith hir liste so wel to live

That dulnesse was of hir adrad.
 She nas to sobre ne to glad ;
 In alle thinges more mesure
 Had never, I trowe, creature. 200
 But many oon with hir loke she herte,
 But that sat hir ful lyte at herte,
 For she knew nothing of hir thoght ;
 But, whether she knew or knew hit noght,
 Algate she ne roghte of hem a stree !
 To gete hir love no ner nas he
 That woned at home than he in Inde :
 The formest was alway behinde.
 But gode folk, over al other,
 She loved as man may do his brother ; 210
 Of whiche love she was wonder large
 In skilful places that bere charge. . . .
 Rody and fresh and lyvely hewed,
 She every day hir beaute newed.
 And negh hir face was alderbest ;
 For, certes, Nature had swich lest
 To make that fair that trewly she
 Was hir cheef patron of beautee
 And cheef ensample of al hir werke,
 And moustre ; for, be hit never so derke, 220
 Methinketh I see hir evermo.
 And yet moreover, thogh alle tho
 That ever lived were now alyve,
 They ne sholde have founde to discryve
 In al hir face a wikked signe ;
 For hit was sad, simple and benigne.

The tones of her voice were soft and musical ; her words convinced with a natural eloquence ; and her judgments, never unfair, harmed no one. She had no pleasure in find-

ing fault, and her "simple record was found as true as any bond." The recollection of her virtues and the pleasure it gives him to rehearse them to a sympathetic listener makes the Black Knight almost forget his grief. He returns to a detailed account of her physical loveliness. Nothing that charmed him is forgotten. Her neck, her shoulders, her arms, her hands, her nails—all are remembered with the fond delight of an enraptured lover. The ivory whiteness of her neck, as of her hands, reminds him of her name. Well was she called the lady Blanche:—

And gode faire **Whyte** she hete ;
 That was my lady name right.
 For she was bothe fair and bright,
 She hadde not her name wrong.

230

No company however gay, no assembly however brilliant, was perfect without her. Her gaiety, while lighting up the gaiety of others, still shone with a steady flame; and when she withdrew, the most brilliant assembly seemed, like a crown of royal gold indeed, but a crown from which its precious stones had been abstracted. Wit she had in abundance, but it was controlled by her goodness of heart. There was no malice in its play: none so witty ever did less harm. Her wit was set

Without malice upon gladnesse ;
 Therto I saw never yet a lesse
 Harnful than she was in doing.
 I sey nat that she nad knowing
 What was harm ; or elles she
 Had coud no good, so thinketh me.

She was neither flirt nor coquette.

Hir luste to holde no wight in honde ;
 Ne, be thou siker, she nolde fonde
 To holde no wight in balaunce
 By half word ne by countenaunce. 240

In a word, she was to the eyes of her impassioned lover a perfect being ; but her very perfection accentuated his own unworthiness. She was never out of his thoughts. For a long time he solaced himself by writing poems in her praise. But life seemed undesirable, impossible without her. He must tell her of his love for her, or die. So, at last plucking up courage, he ventured to address her, but surely on an unlucky day !

I not wel how that I began ;
 Ful evel rehersen it I can ; . . .
 For many a word I overskipte
 In my tale, for pure fere
 Lest my wordes misset were.
 With sorweful herte and woundes dede,
 Softe and quaking for pure drede
 And shame, and stinting in my tale
 For ferde, and myn hewe al pale,
 Ful ofte I wex bothe pale and reed ; 250
 Bowing to hir, I heng the heed ;
 I durste nat ones loke hir on,
 For wit, manere, and al was gon.
 I seyde "Mercy !" and no more.
 Hit nas no game, hit sat me sore.

By-and-by he recovered his presence of mind, and earnestly besought her to be his "lady sweet," promising and swearing that he would ever be steadfast and true in his love for her, and never love any other lady. It was now the lady Blanche's turn to make reply.

And whan I had my tale ydo,
 God wot, she accounted nat a stree
 Of al my tale, so thoghte me.
 To telle shortly as hit is,
 Trewly hir answeere hit was this : 260
 I cannot now wel counterfete
 Hir wordes, but this was the grete
 Of hir answeere : She sayde "Nay !"
 Alouterly. — Allas ! that day
 The sorwe I suffred, and the wo ! . . .
 I durste no more say therto
 For pure fere, but stal away.
 And thus I lived ful many a day ;
 That trewely I hadde no need
 Ferther than my beddes heed 270
 Never a day to seeche sorwe :
 I fond hit redy every morwe.

Faint heart never won fair lady. The Knight again pressed his suit another year, and with happier auspices. During the interval he had given proof of the sincerity and constancy of his love.

So whan my lady knew al this,
 My lady yaf me al hoolly
 The noble gift of hir mercy.

In other words, she accepted and returned his love, with the gift of a ring as a token of her attachment. No need to ask whether he felt glad at heart. Their marriage followed, and to him it was the happiest event in his life—

Of alle happes the alderbeste,
 The gladdest, and the moste at reste.

For trewely that swete wight,
 Whan I had wrong and she the right,
 She wolde alwey so goodely 280
 Foryeve me so debonairly.
 In al my youthe, in alle chaunce,
 She took me in hir governaunce.

Therwith she was alway so trewe,
 Our joye was ever yliche newe ;
 Our hertes wern so even a payre
 That never nas that oon contrayre
 To that other for no wo ;
 Forsothe yliche they suffred tho
 Oo blisse and eek oo sorwe bothe ; 290
 Yliche they were bothe gladde and wrothe ;
 Al was us oon, withoute were.
 And thus we lived ful many a yere
 So wel, I cannat telle how.

“Sir,” quod I, “wher is she now?”
 “Now!” quod he, and stinte anon.
 Therwith he was as deed as stoon,
 And seyde—“Allas that I was bore!
 That was the los that herbefore
 I tolde thee that I had lorn : 300
 Bethenk how I seyde herbeforn—
 ‘Thou wost ful litel what thou menest ;
 I have lost more than thou wenest’ :
 God wot, allas ! right that was she !”

“Allas ! sir, how ? What may that be ?”
 “She is deed !” “Nay !” “Yis, by my trouthe !”
 “Is that your los ? Allas for routhe !”

At this point, as the hunters were now returning from the chase, the poet joined the king and his party. They rode fast, and soon reached a large castle with white walls at Richmond. Just as they were about to enter the courtyard a bell in the castle struck the hour of noon. The sound awakened the dreamer, who found himself reclining in his bed, with the book he had been reading, still in his hand, lying open on the coverlet before him.

NOTES.

1-5. Cf. Scott (*Lady of the Lake*, canto i.)—

“How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide on the lake the lingering morn.”

9. “How they were determined to kill the deer.”

10. *upon lengthe*. For (such) a long time.

11. *So moche embosed*. Hidden, or sought shelter in the wood. (Not embossed—*i.e.*, spotted with foam: the hunters are talking here of a prospective chase.)

I nōt now what. I know not now what; I have forgotten what all they said.

14. *and up anon*. And got up at once; *up* used as a verb.

20. *Relaycs and lymeres*. Relays of dogs, and bloodhounds. A lime-hound (or lyme-hound) was a bloodhound; see *The Faerie Queene*, V. ii. 25—

“Long they her sought, yet nowhere could they find her,
That sure they weened she was escaped away;
But Talus, that could like a lime-hound wind her,
And all things secret wisely could bewray,
At last found out whereas she hidden lay.”

23. *oon ladde a lymere*. One who led in leash a bloodhound.

26. That is, the King, Edward III.

28. *A Goddes halfe*. In God's name; *lit.*, on God's side.

33. *for hoot*. Without delay; at once.

34. *three moot.* Three notes of his horn.

37. *Yhalowed.* View-hallooed.

rechased. Headed back.

39. *rused and stal away.* Dodged and got off; made a feint and stole away. The technical phraseology of the chase is produced with great exactness all through the description. Dr Skeat thinks that "rused" here means roused himself, or rushed away.

41. *hem* is the reflexive pronoun.

43. *wonder fuste.* Remarkably soon. Eager hunters thought it was too soon.

44. *a forloyn.* The recall.

48. *coude no good.* Knew no good; was useless as a hunting dog, that day at least; perhaps was untrained.

56. *grene wente.* Grassy glade, or lane; a passage. Cf. Milton's line (in *Comus*)—

"I know each lane and every *alley green*."

58. *fele.* Many; Old Eng.

66. *croppes brode.* Spreading tops.

76. *even upright.* Straight; exactly upright.

80. John of Gaunt's true age was then twenty-nine, and Chaucer must have known that. Both his patron and (presumably) he were born in 1340: the death of the Duchess occurred in 1369.

86. *Forwhy.* Because. Why (*whi*) is instrumental case of *wha*, *whet* (who, what).

91. That is, he did not sing it, but simply repeated (l. 87) the poem as he composed it.

103. *no mete.* No equal.

111. *God of kinde.* God of nature.

115. *dide of myn hood.* Doffed my hood. So *don* = did on, put on; *dupp'd* = did up, opened.

"Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,
And dupp'd the chamber door."

—*Hamlet*, IV. v.

120. Scan—N' I sáw | thee nót, | sir, tréw | ély.

121. *no fors.* No matter. (At l. 137, below, *I do no fors* = I care not.)

129, 130. "Like an ordinary person, it seemed; notwithstanding the great grief he felt."

132. *ought.* Used adverbially; in some degree, at all.

142. Scan—Methink'th | in gret | sorw' I | yow see.

145. *as wis God helpe me!* So may God indeed help me!
 149. *Paraventure.* Pronounce as if the *v* were *u*. The form "paraunter" occurs in Chaucer.
 151. "*Graunt mercy.*" Fr. *grand merci*=great thanks.
 153. *may nev'r the rath'r be do.* Can never the sooner be done.
 156. See l. 110, *supra*.
 157. *That me is wo.* So that I am sorry; so that to me it is a grief.
 159. *but he hadde.* If he had not; unless he had.
 163, 164. Cf. Shakespeare (*King John*, III. i.)—

"Here I and sorrows sit :

Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it" (Constance).

166-170. With these lines compare *The Winter's Tale*, IV. iv.—

"When you do dance I wish you
 A wave o' the sea," &c. ;

and Skelton's *Garland of Laurell* To Maystres Margaret Hussey

"Merry Margaret . . .
 With solace and gladness,
 Much mirth and no madness,
 All good and no badness ;
 So joyously,
 So maidenly,
 So womanly,
 Her demeaning," &c.

On these lines, and those that follow, Prof. A. W. Ward happily remarks: "Nowhere has Chaucer been happier, both in his appropriations [from the courtly Machault] and in the way in which he has really converted them with beauties of his own, than in this perhaps the most lifelike picture of maidenhood in the whole range of our literature. Is not [this] the portrait of an English girl, all life and all innocence?" Yet there is no depreciation of Blanche in the advancement of a claim for equal honour in behalf of Perdita and Merry Margaret.

179. Scan—Simpl', of | good moch | el, noght | to wyde ; and translate—Innocent, of a good size, not too large. The eyes of the Sunnour (see Prologue to *The Tales*) were narrow—*i.e.*, small.

182. *everydel.* Completely, in every part.

186. "But they were mistaken; mercy was never the sooner practised because she seemed to them inclined to be merciful." Mercy, of

course, here means favours (see l. 254, below). Like Belinda, in *The Rape of the Lock*—

“Favours to none, to all she smiles extends.”

196. *so wel to live*. To be so cheerful in her life ; to live so happily.

203. *hir thoght*. Their feelings or mind.

205. “At any rate she did not trouble herself in the least about them ;” lit., “all the same she did not care (reck) a straw about them.”

206. *no ner*. No nearer.

212. On proper occasions. *Skilful* = reasonable ; also particular.

To bear charge = to be of importance.

218-220. Pattern . . . specimen . . . prodigy.

224, 225. “They would not have found in all her face one wicked sign to speak about.”

226. “For it was grave, innocent, and kindly ;” or “serious, modest, and sweet.”

234. *nad*. Ne had = had (not).

236. *Had could no good*. Had not known good. Good being known only as the opposite of evil.

237. *to holde . . . in honde*. To flirt or play with ; to delude with false hopes. See *Troilus and Criseyde*, III. iii., where Pandar remarks that for a woman “*to holde in love a man in honde*,” and call him love and sweetheart, and yet love another all the while, is to do “*hirsself a shame and him a gyle*.”

238. *fonde*. Try.

255. *sat me sore*. Suited me badly. (Cf. Barbour’s (*The Brus*) description of Douglas, who “lisped some deal”—

“Bot that *sat* him rycht wondir weill.”

262. *the grete*. The gist, or substance.

264. *Alouterly*. All or quite utterly ; absolutely.

270. Where his own head lay.

295. “*wher is she now?*” The poet had not learned from the complaint (l. 93) that the person whose death in that poem was lamented was the wife of the mourner. The mourner, too, had forgotten, in the midst of his reminiscences, the great loss that had just befallen him. The question *Where is she now?* abruptly brings back his grief in a rush, and he is for a moment overpowered.

THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS.

ELEVEN years after he had written his elegy on *The Death of Blanche the Duchess*, we find Chaucer more agreeably engaged on the marriage song to which was given the fanciful title of *The Parliament of Fowls*. It belongs to the early spring of 1381, and the date may be definitely assigned to St Valentine's day of that year. Like *The Thistle and the Rose* of a later date—a poem which closely resembles it in all essential features—it announces the happy approach of a royal marriage. The young King of England, Richard II., then in his sixteenth year, was a suitor for the hand of Anne of Bohemia, daughter of the Emperor Charles IV. There were at least two other suitors of sovereign rank, one a prince of Bavaria, the other a margrave of Meissen, but the princess preferred the English alliance, and Chaucer hastened to announce the betrothal in the allegorical *Parliament of Fowls*. The marriage was celebrated within a year afterwards.

When, in happy circumstances, he wrote this poem, Chaucer was probably still in his fortieth year, and was giving evidence of greater ease and originality as a poet with every succeeding poem. *The Parliament of Fowls* shows traces both of French taste and of the Italian spirit in poetry, no doubt; but it is, no less certainly, pervaded by a freshness which betrays immediate and loving study of nature, and by a joyousness which rings out the true personal note.

The poem, which is only one line short of 700, is composed in Chaucer's favourite stanza (borrowed from Guillaume de Machault) of seven iambic pentameters, with the rimes following in the order *ababbce*.

The subject is approached through the familiar device of a dream. Under the guidance of African (who figures in Cicero's

account¹ of the Dream of Scipio—which, with the commentary of Macrobius thereupon, had recently engrossed the poet's attention) Chaucer finds himself, on the morning of St Valentine's day, in front of a park gate over which are two contradictory advertisements, in gold and in black letters respectively, the one inviting and the other forbidding his entrance. As he stands hesitating, his conductor resolves his doubts by unceremoniously pushing him in, with the blunt remark that

“This wryting is nothing ment by thee,
Ne by noon, but he Loves servant be ;
For thou of love hast lost thy tast, I gesse,
As seek man hath of swete and bitternesse.

But, natheles, although that thou be dulle,
Yit that thou canst not do yit mayst thou see ;
For many a man that may not stonde a pulle
Yit liketh him at the wrastling for to be,
And demeth yit wher he do bet or he ;
And, if thou haddest cunning for tendyte, 10
I shal thee shewen mater of to wryte.”

With that my hond in his he took anoon,
Of which I comfort caughte, and wente in faste ;
But Lord ! so I was glad and wel begoon !
For overal, wher that I myn eyen caste,
Were trees clad with leves that ay shal laste,
Eche in his kinde, of colour fresh and grene
As emeraude, that joye was to sene :—

The bilder ook ; and eek the hardy asshe ;
The piler elm, the cofre unto careyne ; 20
The boxtree piper ; holm to whippes lasshe ;
The sayling firr ; the cipres, deth to pleyne ;
The sheter ew, the asp for shaftes pleyne ;

¹ *De Republica*, Bk. vi.

The olyve of pees ; and eek the drunken vyne ;
The victor palm ; the laurer to devyne.

A garden saugh I, ful of blosmy bowes,
Upon a river in a grene mede,
Theras that swetnesse evermore ynow is
With floures whyte, blewe, yelow and rede ;
And colde welle-stremes, nothing dede, 30
That swommen ful of smale fisshes lighte,
With finnes rede and scales silver brighte.

On every bough the briddes herde I singe
With voys of aungel in hir armonye,
That besyed hem hir briddes forth to bringe ;
The litel conyes to hir pley gunne hye ;
And further al aboute I gan espye
The dredful roo, the buk, the hert and hynde,
Squerels and bestes smale of gentil kynde.

Of instruments of strenges in acord 40
Herde I so pley a ravissching swetnesse
That God, that maker is of al and Lord,
Ne herde never better, as I gesse.
Therwith a wind, unneth it might be lesse,
Made in the leves grene a noise softe,
Acordant to the foules songe onlofte.

The air of that place so attempre was
That never was grevance ther of hoot ne cold ;
Ther wex eke every holsom spice and gras ;
Ne no man may ther wexe seek ne old ; 50
Yet was ther joye more a thousand fold
Than man can telle ; ne never wolde it nighte,
But ay cleer day to any mannes sighte.

The garden was full of people, roaming about or resting at their leisure. Here sat Cupid under a tree, forging and filing his arrows. There lay Venus in a shady place, her gilt hair lightly bound with a golden thread. Bacchus and Ceres were seated beside her. Around a glittering temple reared on columns of jasper danced a bevy of women, of whom some were fair of themselves and some were gay: on the temple roof sat hundreds of fair white doves. Crowds of such engaging characters as Delight and Gentleness, Youth and Beauty, Peace and Patience, were visible at every turn. The poet peeped into the temple, and for a while found amusement in looking at pictures which presented in glowing colours the loves of Paris and Helen, Tristram and Isoude, Pyramus and Thisbe, &c. But the greatest attraction was in the open garden.

Whan I was come ageyn into the place
 That I of spak that was so swete and grene,
 Forth welk I tho, myselven to solace :
 Tho was I war wher that ther sat a Quene
 That, as of light the somer sonne shene
 Passeth the sterre, right so over mesure
 She fairer was than any creature.

60

And in a launde, upon an hille of floures,
 Was set this noble goddessse, Nature.
 Of braunches were hir halles and hir boures,
 Ywrought after hir craft and hir mesure.
 Ne ther nas foul that comth of engendrure
 That they ne were prest in hir presence
 To take hir doom and yeve hir audience.

For this was on Seynt Valentynes day,
 Whan every foul cometh ther to chese his make,

70

Of every kinde that men thenketh may ;
And that so huge a noyse gan they make
That erthe, and see, and tree, and every lake
So ful was that unnethe was ther space
For me to stonde, so ful was al the place. . .

At the command of Nature the birds range themselves according to their classes: "foules of rayvne" take the highest place; then "the foules smale" that eat according to inclination; the water-fowl are lowest, in the dale; and those that live by seed find suitable accommodation on the green. But the poet particularises:—

Ther mighte men the royal egle finde,
That with his sharpe look perceth the sonne ;
And other egles of a lower kinde,
Of which that clerkes wel devysen conne ;
Ther was the tyraunt with his fethres donne
And greye,—I mene the gosbawk, that doth pyne 80
To briddes, for his outrageous ravyne ;

The gentil faucon, that with his feet distreyneth
The kinges hond ; the hardy sperhawk eke,
The quayles foo ; the merlyon, that peyneth
Himself ful ofte the larke for to seke ;
Ther was the douve with hir eyen meke ;
The jalous swan, ayens his deth that singeth ;
The oule eek, that of deth the bode bringeth ;

The crane—the geaunt, with his trompes sounē ;
 The theef the chogh ; and eek the jangling pye ;
 The scorning jay ; the eles foo the heroune ; 91
 The false lapwing, ful of trecherye ;
 The stare, that the counseyl can bewrye ;

The tame ruddok ; and the coward kyte ;
 The cok, that orloge is of thropes lyte ;

The sparrow, Venus sone ; the nightingale,
 That clepeth forth the fresshe leves newe ;
 The swallow, mordrer of the bees smale
 That maken hony of floures fresshe of hewe ;
 The wedded turtel with his herte trewe ; 100
 The peecok with his aungels fethres brighte ;
 The fesaunt, scorner of the cok by nighte ;

The waker goos ; the cukkow, ever unkinde ;
 The popinjay, ful of delicacye ;
 The drake, stroyer of his owne kinde ;
 The storke, wreker of avouterye ;
 The hote cormeraunt, ful of glotonye ;
 The raven wys ; the crow with vois of care ;
 The throstel olde ; the frosty feldefare.

What shulde I seyn ? Of foules every kinde 110
 That in this worlde han fethres and stature
 Men mighten in that place assembled finde
 Before the noble goddesse, Nature.
 And everich of hem did his bisy cure
 Benignely to chese, or for to take
 By hir acord, his formel or his make.

But to the poynt : Nature held on hir honde
 A formel egle, of shap the gentileste
 That ever she among hir werkes fonde,
 The most benigne and eek the goodlieste ; 120
 In hir was every vertu at his reste,
 So ferforth that Nature herself had blisse
 To loke on hir, and ofte hir bek to kisse.

The "formel egle"—the prize of the Assembly is, of course, the princess Anne of Bohemia. For her are three suitors—all eagles in the allegory; but it is evident from the first that the royal eagle is the favourite. From his rank he is entitled, first of all others, to choose his mate on St Valentine's day. But the other two, such is the strength of their love, boldly prefer their petition: and, as the lady bashfully remains silent, the rivalry proceeds till the day is almost done. At this waste of time the whole Assembly of birds become impatient, and set up such a loud, incessant, and varied clamour—in the midst of which the notes of the goose, the cuckoo, and the duck are especially persistent and piercing—that the poet is almost deafened, and Nature finds it necessary to interfere. She imposes silence; and proposes that each order shall, through its representative, give an opinion on the rival merits of the three wooers. A falcon, speaking for the birds of prey, declares that the only seeming way to end the competition is by battle to which the three eagles eagerly assent—unless, goes on the falcon in spite of their interruption, the lady herself will say which of the three in her opinion is the worthiest. The goose, representing the water-fowl, utters a verdict which excites general derision, and provokes a caustic remark from the sparrow hawk. For the seed birds the turtle gives an opinion which is in direct opposition to that of the goose. The cuckoo's voice in the matter is, that, as the three suitors cannot agree, they should go unmated, and allow the rest to choose their mates and enjoy themselves. This selfish advice is smartly condemned by the merlin. Nature ends the discussion by proposing that judgment be left to the "formel egle" herself, with a strong recommendation of the claims of the royal eagle. Thereupon the "formel" asks respite for a year to consider the case,—a request which Nature readily grants,

reminding the impatient suitors that "a year is not so long" to wait.

And whan this werk al broght was to an ende,
 To every foule Nature yaf his make
 By even acorde ; and on hir wey they wende.
 A, Lord ! the blisse and joye that they make !
 For ech of hem gan other in winges take,
 And with hir nekkes ech gan other winde,
 Thanking alwey the noble goddessse of kinde. 130

Before parting, however, a select choir of the song-birds sing a roundel, according to the annual custom ; and with the "shouting" and the whirl of innumerable wings as the bird-parliament rises, the dreaming poet is awakened from his slumbers.

NOTES.

7. *stonde a pulle*. Take a bout of wrestling ; stand a throw.
9. *wher he do bet or he*. Whether this one or that one does better.
10. *cunning for tendyte*. Skill in poetical composition.
11. *mater of to wryte*. A subject for poetry ; lit., matter to write of. (See Grammatical Note on Prepositions, p. xxxiii.)
14. *wel begoon*. Well content ; as "wo bigoon" is distressed.
19. The poetical list of trees beginning here is taken partly from Boccaccio's *Teside* (cir. 1350) and partly also from the *Roman de la Rose*. Spenser, in his turn, imitates Chaucer in his description of the Wandering Wood (*Faerie Queene*, I. i.), beginning—

"The sailing pine, the cedar proud and tall,
 The vine-prop elm, the poplar never dry."

20. *the piler elm*. The pillar-like elm.
the cofre unto careyne. That is, used for making coffins for corpses.

21. *boxtree piper*. Boxwood used for making pipes.

22. *sayling firr*. The pine, useful for masts of ships.

deth to pleyne. Planted at graves; or the sad symbol of death.

23. "The yew for bows, the aspen for smooth arrows."

25. *the laurer to doryne*. The laurel for prophesying by. The Greeks called this tree daphne, and it was sacred to Apollo: see Milton's *Hymn on the Nativity*, XIX.—

"Apollo from his shrine

Can no more *divine*,

With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving."

26 *seqq.* The whole description of the garden of love is also imitated from Boccaccio's *Tescide*, Bk. vii. 51 *seqq.*

30. *nothing dede*. Flowing briskly.

38. *The dreadful roo*. Not formidable, though the short horns of the male are strong and sharp, and the animal is sometimes combative; but rather timid, the adjective being used here subjectively, or actively: cf. "the fearful hare."

68. St Valentine's day, 14th February, when birds choose their mates.

79. *the tyraunt . . . goshawk, &c.* The description, beginning here, of Nature's birds is imitated from the Latin of Alanus de Insulis, Bishop of Auxerre (twelfth century).

92. Because the bird beguiles intruders away from its nest by cries and movements of feigned distress. The reference, however, may be to the classical tragic story of Tereus, who practised abominable treachery upon the sisters Proene and Philomela, and was changed into a hoopoe, a bird crested like the lapwing.

93. "The starling, that can betray secrets." (Being capable of speech? or, simply, the chattering starling?)

94. *The tame raddok*. The redbreast, which "pays to trusted man his annual visit" in winter.

95. "The cock, the clock of little villages." Gray (*Elegy*) refers to "the cock's shrill clarion" rousing the villagers from their slumbers. Cf. Shakespeare (*Richard III.*, V. iii.)—

"The early village cock

Hath twice done salutation to the morn" (Ratcliff *loq.*)

96. *Venus sone*. Being an amorous bird, sacred to Venus.

97. The nightingale arrives in England about the middle of April.

100. *The wedded turtel*. The male and female remain attached to each other during life.

103. *The waker goos.* Referring to the story of the geese that, by their gabbling or cackling, roused the watch, and saved the Capitol from a night attack of the Gauls, 390 B.C. (See Livy.)

The cuckow, ever unkinde. Leaving its young to be reared by another bird.

109. *the frosty feldefurc.* A winter visitor to our country, of the thrush variety; common in Norway and Northern Europe.

113-116. See a description of a similar scene in Dunbar (*The Thistle and the Rose*).

121. *at his restc.* Settled, or centred; as in its native home.

THE HOUSE OF FAME.

THE production of *The House of Fame* cannot be definitely dated, but there is clear evidence that it was written while its author was still freshly under the influence of Italian literature. It reveals study on Chaucer's part of both Dante and Petrarch. It may reasonably be placed after—but not many years after—*The Parliament of Fowls*; say 1384. Chaucer was then in the last of his ten years' tenancy of a house over the city gate at Aldgate, and was officially employed as Comptroller both of the Wool and of the Petty Customs for the Port of London. He was in prosperous enough circumstances, in spite of the somewhat irksome nature of his official duties, which did not yet permit him the services of a deputy; but his domestic happiness was less than it might have been, owing to some disagreement, whatever its cause, with his wife. To both these facts the poem distinctly refers. One half-humorous, half-pitiful reference to the latter is in these words:—

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| “ And, for I sholde the bet abreyde, ¹ | ¹ <i>waken up.</i> |
| Me mette “Awak!” to me he seyde, | |
| Right in the same voys and stevene ² | ² <i>tone.</i> |
| That useth oon ³ I coude nevene; ⁴ | ³ (<i>his wife.</i>) |
| And with that vois, soth for to sayn, | ⁴ <i>name.</i> |
| My minde cam to me agayn,— | |
| For it was goodly seyde to me, | |
| So nas it never wout to be. | |

The House of Fame is Chaucer's noblest poem in the allegorical form, and is constructed on a plan which was mainly of his own invention. Pope's version of the larger part of it, *The Temple of Fame*, containing as it does some striking passages, has familiarised a few of the leading features of Chaucer's work

to modern readers, yet he has not quite preserved the plan of the older and greatly more interesting poem. Chaucer's plan allows free play to a fine native humour, and affords scope for much dramatic dialogue, even finding room for no inconsiderable display of learning, both classical and scientific, and of personal wisdom, the fruit of experience. The author's revelation of himself, not only in regard to his outward circumstances but also with respect to his private feelings and condition of mind, is an interesting feature of the poem. Of special interest is the statement, frankly made, of how he himself, at forty-four, stood personally affected by the desire for fame.

The House of Fame is in three Books—the first and second of about 500 lines each, the third, though unfinished, equal in length to the former two.

The First Book, after discussing briefly the general subject of dreams, and invoking a blessing on those who will listen seriously to a dream which he is about to relate, and will "take it well and scorn it not," goes on to describe how, one long winter night, the poet dreamt that he stood alone and wondering within a great crystal palace or temple, filled with statues of gold and other costly works of art. One fair statue, outshining all others, he at once recognised as representing the goddess of beauty, and thence knew that he was in the temple of Venus. As he roamed about he came upon a mural tablet of brass, on which were inscribed the opening lines of Virgil's famous epic of her son—*ARMA VIRUMQUE CANO*, &c.; and a frieze, illustrating in a series of rich carvings the whole story of *The Æneid*, from Sinon's treachery at the gate of Troy to the hero's marriage with Lavinia! Satisfied and awed with the grandeur of what he saw, he began to feel his loneliness, and went out of the temple to discover, if possible, his whereabouts. But, outside, his bewilderment only increased; for, far as he could see, on all sides was nothing but a waste of sand, without town or tree or living creature. Instinctively, in mute appeal to heaven for companionship, he raised his eyes to the sun, which seemed to shine with double splendour; and by-and-by he descried, at a great height overhead, a golden eagle swiftly descending towards him with flashing wings!

The Second Book describes the seizure of the poet by the powerful eagle, their upward flight through illimitable space,

and the various talk they had on the way till their arrival at a station, "betwixen hevenc, erthe, and see," where the eagle set him fairly on his feet again, and directing him to a stately palace—The House of Fame—which closed the vista of a long avenue, parted company for a time, and left him to his own devices.

The manner in which the royal bird pounced upon him and bore him off filled him with such terror that he became unconscious, and only recovered when reassured by the friendly tone and familiar raillery of his captor. The eagle informed him who he was,—

"I that in my feet have thee,
Of which thou hast a feer and wonder,
Am dwelling with the god of thunder,
Which that men callen Jupiter."

By his master's command, he was bearing the poet to a place where he would be both entertained and instructed; and this mark of Jove's favour was by way of recompense and reward for the poet's lonely life and the many verses he had written in honour of love. The place referred to was the wonderful House of Fame, to which rose up, according to a natural law, every whispered or spoken word, uttered by any one anywhere, on earth or sea beneath. There it became audible, and in strangewise visible!

"Every speche, or noise, or soun,
Through his multiplicatioun,
Thogh hit were pyped of a mouse,
Moot nede come to Fames House. . . .

But understand now right wel this;
Whan any speche ycomen is
Up to the paleys, anonright
Hit wexeth lik the same wight
Which that the word in erthe spak,
Be hit clothed reed or blak;
And hath so verray his liknesse
That spak the word, that thou wilt gesse
That hit the same body be,
Man or woman, he or she.
And is not this a wonder thing?"

The entertainment promised to the poet was awaiting him in the House of Fame ; but there was much incidental entertainment on the way thither. The gradual recession and diminution of the earth, as the poet was borne upwards ; the map-like appearance of the many-featured landscape beneath him ; the starry wonders around and above and then under him, especially the crowded Galaxy, and the “eyrish bestes” of the Zodiac—filled his mind with new sensations of awe and admiration. The affability of the eagle, to whom all these phenomena were familiar, kept his emotions, however, in check. He listened attentively when the bird enlightened him in the wave-theory of sound-propagation ; but he promptly declined an object-lesson in astronomy as they passed among the planets. And he shared in the jocularity of his feathered companion when at last they were within hail of their destination.

“ Now up the heed ! for al is wel ;
 Seynt Julyan, lo, bon hostel !
 See here the House of Fame, lo !
 Maistow not heren that I do ? ”

It was like the sound of the sea beating against hollow rocks, and the poet heard it distinctly. As they came nearer, it grew louder, and the poet began to get alarmed. The eagle assured him that what was frightening him would not bite him ; it was nothing but the congregation in the House of Fame of the great sounds of the earth ; and there was really no cause of alarm. And with this word—

“ I niste how, but in a strete
 He sette me faire on my fete,
 And seyde—“ Walke forth a pas,
 And tak thyn aventure or cas.”

This accordingly the poet did, the eagle meanwhile staying behind, but with the intention of waiting till his services should again be necessary.

The Third Book opens with a humorous Invocation to the god of poetry :—

“ O god of science and of light,
 Apollo ! through thy grete might

This litel laste book thou gye.
Nat that I wilne, for maistrye,
Here art poetical be shewed ;
But, for the rym is light and lewed,
Yit make hit somewhat agreable,
Though som vers faile in a sillable ;
And that I do no diligence
To shewe craft, but o sentence.
And if, divyne Vertu, thou
Wilt helpe me to shewe now
That in myn hede ymarked is—
Lo, that is for to menen this,
The Hous of Fame to descryve—
Thou shalt see me go, as blyve,
Unto the nexte laure I see,
And kisse hit, for hit is thy tree.
Now entreth in my breste anoon !”

The poet, then, without further preface, continues the narrative from the point at which he left off in the Second Book. The Castle or House of Fame stood in front of him on the top of a high rock which glistened like steel, but on examination was found to be a rock of ice—a feeble foundation, surely, for the huge pile erected upon it. Names were carved all over the rock, but those on the southern side were in various stages of illegibility through the melting of the ice, while those on the northern side showed clear and distinct, being “conserved with the shade.” The fabric itself was a wonderful piece of Gothic architecture. It was built of one solid beryl, and adorned with innumerable towers and turrets, niched pinnacles, and figures in the niches. The windows, with which the walls were pierced on all sides, were as countless as the flakes in a fall of snow. In recesses and on balconies at various elevations, and crowded in open spaces at the base of the wall, stood or sat harpers and trumpeters, romancers and minstrels, jugglers and magicians, all busily plying their several crafts. It was a motley gathering, and numbered many thousands. Among them the poet discerned Orpheus and Arion, Marsyas and Mæcenas, Joab and Simon Magus, Circe and Calypso ; and many others, mere imitators, or at most of minor note. The “snare harpers with herglees” were legion : though nameless they were none the less

noisy, performing lustily on all manner of instruments, shawms and bagpipes, flutes and liting-horns, down even to

“Swich pypes made of grene corne
As han thise litel herde-gromes
That kepen bestes in the bromes.”

Passing freely through the crowd, he entered the Hall of Fame by a gorgeous gate, and found himself in the midst of greater marvels than he had yet witnessed. Floor and walls and ceiling were inlaid with pure gold half a foot thick, and in the centre rose a ruby throne, on which sat the goddess Fame herself. Her figure seemed, at the first glance, not more than a cubit in height, but as he gazed she grew to such proportions that her head seemed to tower to the very heavens, and he saw that her body was studded all over with eyes, ears, and tongues. In the hall-entrance were heralds and pursuivants, in their appropriate dresses, shouting “Largess ! largess !” and round the throne stood the Nine Muses, singing, so that the walls echoed again, —

“Heried be thou and thy name,
Goddess of renown and fame !”

A stately row of metal pillars led up the hall from the doorway. On these stood the sage historians — Josephus, upbearing on his shoulders the fame of Jewery ; Statius upholding the fame of Thebes ; great Homer, charged with the fame of Troy ; Virgil, proclaiming the story of Pius Æneas ; Ovid, celebrating the god of Love ; Lucan, supporting Cesar and Pompey ; and Claudian, overweighted with the dual reign of Proserpine and Pluto. These were the chief ; but there were many others of less note, thick as the nests of a rookery. From these his attention was withdrawn by a great buzzing sound behind him, and turning round he beheld the entrance of an innumerable host of claimants for fame. They approached the throne of the goddess in the guise of worshippers and petitioners, and presented their various claims for her favour. Some she rewarded at once with a blast on her golden trumpet, that carried their glory throughout the world ; some, though not a whit less deserving of renown, she, with the perversity of her sister Fortune, petulantly refused to honour ; and some, with little discrimination of their deserts, she consigned to everlasting infamy by a blast on her black trumpet.

When eight or nine successive companies had been dealt with, not always according to either their deserts or their desires, but rather according to the whim of the goddess, somebody at his back startled the poet by asking who he was, and what he was doing there: was he, too, a petitioner for fame? No, the poet replied, with modest self-dependence; he knew best himself how he stood, and was content with that knowledge. And as for being where he was, he had been conveyed thither: and, though he had been much entertained by what he had seen, yet he must confess to a little disappointment—he had expected to hear “som newe tydings,”

“Som newe thinges, I not ¹ what, ¹ *know not.*
Tydinges, other this or that,
Of love, or swiche thinges glade.”

When the stranger understood him, he told him that he was in the wrong place for those tidings of which he was curious to hear, and offered to conduct him to the right place. They accordingly left the House of Fame, and walked on till they came to where in a valley an enormously vast cage like house, constructed of wicker, was for ever creaking and whirling round and round. It was full of holes and open doors, wheels and whirligigs, noises of all kinds, both loud and low; and this was the House of Rumour. Nothing about it was at rest, and everything was noisy. As the poet was wondering how he could get into it, he looked round, and saw his eagle conveniently perched upon a stone at no great distance. To the eagle he appealed for aid, and was at once conveyed within the revolving House, which, as soon as he was deposited on the floor of it, stopt moving, and he could look about him with some composure. Unlike the Hall of Fame, the place he now found himself in was so crowded with gossip and rumour that there was scarcely standing room; and no wonder, for there was ready ingress to every voice that floated up from earth, and here appeared in the guise of the person that uttered it.

“And every wight that I saugh there
Rounded ¹ ech in otheres ere ¹ *whispered.*
A newe tyding prevely,
Or elles told al openly
Right thus, and seyde—‘Nost not thou
That is betid, lo, late or now?’

‘No,’ quod the other, ‘tel me what’;
 And than he tolde him this and that,
 And swoor therto that hit was sooth—
 ‘Thus hath he seyde’—and ‘Thus he dooth’—
 ‘Thus shall it be’—‘Thus herde I seye’—
 ‘That shal be found’—‘That dar I leye.’ . . .

But al the wondermost was this :—

Whan oon had herd a thing, ywis,
 He com forth to another wight,
 And gan him tellen, anoonright,
 The same that to him was told,
 Or hit a furlong way² was old,
 But gan somewhat for to eche³
 To this tyding in this speche
 More than hit ever was.

² *a couple of minutes.*

³ *eke or add.*

And nat so sone departed nas
 That he fro him, that he ne mette
 With the thridde ; and, or he lette
 Any stounde, he tolde him als ;
 Were the tyding sooth or fals,
 Yit wolde he telle hit nathelees,
 And evermo with more encrees.”

In this way truth and falsehood were inextricably mixed, and flew off through crack or crevice to the House of Fame, there to be dealt with as the fickle goddess might determine. Chief amongst those gossip-mongers and fabricators were shipmen and pilgrims, pardoners and couriers, with scrips brimful of unreliable reports, and boxes crammed with lies. The poet stepped briskly about in the midst of all the chatter and bustle, intent with ear and eye for anything of special interest ; and at last, hearing a great hubbub in a corner, and seeing hundreds running thither, he gave that quarter of the hall his whole attention, all the more readily that he knew it was where love affairs were discussed. It was impossible, however, for him to make out what it was all about. He could only hear people shouting “What is it?” and see the crowd pushing, and kicking, and clambering on top of each other in an eager desire for news. At last, spying a man who seemed to be a person of authority, the poet apparently meant to accost him ; but here, at an extremely interesting point in the narrative, the poem abruptly stops—unfinished.

OF Decembre the tenth day,
 Whan it was night, to slepe I lay
 Right theras I was wont to done,
The And fil on slepe wonder sone. . .
Temple of
Venus. And, as I sleep, me mette I was
 Within a temple ymad of glas,
 In whiche ther were mo images
 Of gold stondinge in sondry stages, . . .
 And mo curious portreytures,
 And queynte maner of figures 10
 Of olde werk than I saugh ever.
 But certeynly I niste never
 Wher that I was ; but wel wiste I
 It was of Venus redely
 The temple ; for, in portreyture,
 I saugh anonright hir figure
 Naked fletinge in a see ;
 And also on hir heed, pardee,
 Hir rose garlonde whyt and reed ;
 And her comb to kembe hir heed ; 20
 Hir dowves ; and daun Cupido,
 Hir blinde sone ; and Vulcano,
 That in his face was ful broun.

But, as I romed up and down,
 I fond that on a wal ther was
 Thus writen, on a table of bras—
I wol now singe, if that I can,
The Armes, and also the Man
That first cam, through his destinee,
Fugitif of Troy contree,
In Itaille, with ful moche pyme,
Unto the strondes of Lavyne. 30

And tho began the story anoon
As I shal telle yow echoon.

[Here follows an epitome (in some three hundred lines) of the whole story of *The Æneid*, eloquently represented in a series of pictured scenes and sculptured figures on the temple wall.]

Whan I had seyen al this sighte
In this noble temple thus,
“A, Lord!” thoughte I, “that madest us,
Yet saw I never swich noblesse
Of images, ne swich richesse,
As I saw graven in this chirche; 40
But not woot I who dide hem wirche,
Ne wher I am, nin what contree.
But now wol I go out and see
Right at the wiket, if I can
See owher stering any man
That may me telle wher I am.”

Whan I out at the dores cam,
I faste aboute me beheld.
Then saw I but a large feld,
As fer as that I mighte see, 50
Withouten toun, or hous, or tree,
Or bush, or gras, or ered lond;
For al the feld nas but of sond
As smal as man may see lye
In the desert of Libye.
Ne I no maner creature
That is yformed by nature
Ne saw I me to rede or wisse.
“O Crist!” thoughte I, “that art in blisse,
Fro fantom and illusioun 60
Me save!” And with devocioun

Myn yen to the heven I caste.
 Tho was I war lo ! at the laste
 That faste by the sonne, as hye
 As kenne mighte I with myn eye,
 Me thoughte I saugh an egle sore,
 But that hit semed moche more
 Then I had any egle seyn.

But this as sooth as deeth certeyn,

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----|
| The Golden Eagle. | Hit was of golde, and shone so bright That never saugh men such a sight ^c Butif the heven hadde ywonne | 71 |
|----------------------------------|---|----|

Al newe of golde another sonne :
 So shone the egles fethres brighte,
 And somewhat downward gan hit lighte.

This egle, of which I have yow told.
 That shone with fethres as of gold,
 Which that so hye gan to sore,
 I gan beholde more and more

To see her beautee and the wonder.

80

But never was ther dint of thonder,
 Ne that thing that men calle foudre,
 That smoot somtyme a tour to poudre,
 And in his swifte coming brende,
 That so swithe gan descende,
 As this foul, whan hit behelde
 That I aroume was in the felde.

And with his grimme pawes stronge,
 Within his sharpe nayles longe,
 Me, fleinge, at a swappe he hente,

90

And with his sours agayn up wente,
 Me caryinge in his clawes starke
 As lightly as I were a larke,
 How high I cannot telle yow,

For I cam up, I niste how.
 For so astonied and asweved
 Was every virtu in my heved
 What with his sours and with my drede
 That al my feling gan to dede,—
 Forwhy it was to greet affray. 100

Thus I longe in his clawes lay,
 Til at the laste he to me spak
 In mannes vois, and seyde—"Awak!
 And be not so agast, for shame!"
 And called me tho by my name, . . .
 And seyde twies—"Seynte Marie!
 Thou arte noyous for to carie,
 And nothing nedeth hit, pardee!
 For, also wis God helpe me,
 As thou non harm shalt have of this; 110
 And this cas, that betyd thee is,
 Is for thy lore and for thy prow.
 Lat see! darst thou yet loke now?
 Be ful assured, boldely,
 I am thy frend." And therwith I
 Gan for to wondren in my minde:
 "O God," thoughte I, "that madest kynde,
 Shal I non other weyes deye?
 Wher Joves wol me stellifye,
 Or what thing may this signifye? 120
 I neither am Enok, ne Elye,
 Ne Romulus, ne Ganymede
 That was ybore up, as men rede,
 To hevene with dan Jupiter,
 And maad the goddes boteler."

Lo, this was tho my fantasye;
 But he that bar me gan espye

That I so thoghte, and seyde this—
 “Thou demest of thyself amis ;
 For Joves is not therabout, 130
 I dar wel putte thee out of doute,
 To make of thee as yet a sterre.
 But, er I bere thee moche ferre,
 I wol thee telle what I am,
 And whider thou shalt, and why I cam
 To done this,—so that thou take
 Good herte, and not for fere quake.”

But of thy very neyghebores,
 That dwellen almost at thy dores,
Chaucer Thou herest neither that ne this ; 140
at study. For, whan thy labour doon al is,
 And hast ymaad thy rekeninges,
 In stede of reste and newe thinges,
 Thou gost hoom to thy hous anoon,
 And, also domb as any stoon,
 Thou sittest at another boke
 Til fully daswed is thy loke ;
 And livest thus as an hermyte,
 Although thyn abstinence is lyte.

Oon that stood right at my bak, 150
 Me thoughte, goodly to me spak,
Chaucer's And seyde - “Frend, what is thy name ?
view of Artow com hider to han fame ?”
Fame. “Nay, forsothe, frend !” quod I,
 “I cam not hider, graunt mercy !

For no swich cause, by my heed !
 Suffyceth me, as I were deed,
 That no wight have my name in honde.
 I wot myself best how I stonde ;
 For what I drye or what I thinke 160
 I wol myselven al hit drinke,
 Certeyn, for the more part,
 As ferforth as I can myn art."

NOTES.

8. *in sondry stages*. In various postures or positions. Stage is from Lat. *stare*, to stand.

17. Venus Aphrodite, sprung from the foam (*aphrós*) of the sea.

21. Cupido, or Eros, son of Venus, or Aphrodite ; young, winged, armed with arrows of gold and of lead, and having his eyes covered so that he acts blindly.

22. *Vulcāno*. Vulcānus, god of fire, the lover of Venus.

27-32. Translation of the opening lines of Virgil's great epic, *The Æneid* :—

"Arma virumque cano, Trojæ qui primus ab oris
 Italiam, fato profugus, Lavinaque venit
 Littora : multum ille et terris jactatus et alto," &c.

Æneas, the hero of *The Æneid*, was the son of Venus ; his father was Anchises, whose beauty matched that of the immortal gods.

52. *ered lond*. Ploughed (or arable) land.

53. *nas but*. Was only (Fr. idiom).

55. *Libye*. The Libyan desert. Libya was the Greek name for the whole of Africa, as far as Africa was known to the ancients.

58. *me to rede or wisse*. To counsel or inform me.

66-75. The idea of the talking eagle is probably from Dante (*Purg.* IX.)

69. *this*. This is (slurred).

82. *foudre*. Fr., thunderbolt. The stem of the word is seen in *fulmen*. Cf. *poudre*, from *pulverem*.

87. *aroume*. A-roam, at large, wandering.

90. A particularly happy line—clean, vigorous, and graphic.

91. *with his sours*. With an immediate strong upward spring.

93. Note the felicity of the figure.

96. *asweved*. Stunned.

99. *gan to dede*. Became deadened, or stupefied.

109. *also wis God helpe me!* As may God indeed be my help!
Also is the full form of *us*. *Wis* is an adv. = truly.

112. "Is for your instruction and benefit."

120. After reigning thirty-seven years, Romulus, the founder of Rome (says Dr Smith), "was at length taken away from the world. One day, as he was reviewing his people in the Campus Martius, near the Goat's Pool, the sun was suddenly eclipsed, darkness overspread the earth, and a dreadful storm dispersed the people. When daylight had returned Romulus had disappeared." He escaped death, says Horace, being borne to heaven by the horses of Mars (*Car.* iii. 3.).

Ganymede, the fairest of mortals, was carried off to Olympus by Jove in the form of an eagle, to become cup-bearer to the father of gods and men. The mystery of Enoch's departure from life, and the story of Elijah's translation to heaven, are known to all readers of the Bible.

124. *with dan Jupiter*. By god Jupiter. *Dan*, abbrev. form of *dominus*.

132. The humour of this aquiline remark—its polite irony—is enjoyable. It may be remarked here that Chaucer's power of characterisation by dialogue is essentially dramatic.

141. *thy labour*. The eagle is talking to him. His *labour* refers to his duties as Comptroller of the Wool Customs, and at the same time of the Petty Customs (it is probable) as well, in the Port of London. It was not till 1385 he was permitted the privilege of employing a deputy. See Chronological Notes, p. x.

143. *newe thinges*. Change of occupation; amusement.

146. *another boke*. Not ledgers, but beloved authors. Like Charles Lamb in a later age, Chaucer was glad to exchange the task-work of entering invoices and posting up ledgers for the congenial study of philosophy and imaginative literature (see *Essays of Elia*, *Coming Home for Ever*, &c.)

149. "As retired as a hermit, but not practising the austere life of a hermit." Chaucer's love of pleasure was as frank as a healthy boy's. The twelve immediately preceding lines are of autobiographical interest. *The Hous of Fame*, more than any other of his works, reveals the personal habits of the poet, his character, and his philosophy of life with a united freshness and frankness that brings us closer to his personality than we can get to many a famous writer who lived

much nearer our own time. One thing is notable,—there is no affectation about Chaucer.

157, 158. "It will suffice me, when I am dead, that nobody speak badly of me." As Horace says, "*Non vixit male qui natus moriensque fefellit.*"

159. He was his own critic.

160, 161. "What injustice is done me, equally with what I think in my own favour, I will keep to myself."

162, 163. "For the most part, at any rate, as far as my poetry is concerned."

TROILUS AND CRISEYDE.

By much the longest and most elaborate of Chaucer's poems, outside the unfinished collection known as *The Canterbury Tales*, is the mythical love-story and tragedy of *Troilus and Criseyde*. Its very length proves that its composition must have engaged the attention of Chaucer for a long time. It was written about the same time as the *House of Fame*,—probably at various periods between 1380 and 1385. The 8000 odd lines of which it consists are divided into five Books, and the measure employed is iambic pentameter, with a running arrangement in sets of seven. In this stanza, afterwards called Rime Royal from its use by King James in *The King's Quair*, the rimes follow in the order indicated by the letters *ababbec*. It is the measure of *The Parlement of Foules*, and of *The Clerkes Tale* and *The Tale of the Man of Lawe* in the *Canterbury* series.

Less original than the *House of Fame*, *Troilus and Criseyde* is a more sustained effort; the style, too, is maturer, and the versification more masterly. Chaucer speaks modestly of it as a mere translation from the Latin of a certain Lollius; but it is very plainly a translation of Boccaccio's Italian poem *Filostrato*, and more than a mere translation. Chaucer dwells upon the happier early part of the story, and expands and modifies the original with genuine poetical skill; while his taste and tact are not less evident in his contraction of the tragic close, over which Boccaccio lingers unduly. There are, besides, fugitive glimpses of Dante, Boethius, and the *Roman de la Rose* in Chaucer's noble reproduction of Boccaccio's victim of love. It should be added that, while Boccaccio invented the character of the go-between, the humour and worldly wisdom of Pandarus are Chaucer's own.

It was doubtless to Boccaccio that Chaucer owed his know-

ledge of the story of the Trojan lovers. But Boccaccio was not the inventor of the story. He followed the Latin prose romance of Guido de Colonna, who had previously followed the *Roman de Troie* of Benoît de Sainte-Maure. To this Norman-French poet of the twelfth century belongs the credit of having invented the popular story of Troilus and the faithless Cressida. Needless to say, the story is not in Homer. It is best known to the modern reader by Shakespeare's dramatic version, which is on Chaucerian lines

THE love-story of Troilus and Cressida is an episode in the ample "tale of Troy divine." The siege of Troy by the Greeks is in progress. The Trojan Calchas, convinced that the beleaguered city is doomed to destruction, deserts to the Grecian side, leaving behind him his beautiful daughter Cressida—a young widow, living by herself in quiet retirement. On a festival day Prince Troilus, who has hitherto been insensible to love and a scorner of its power, sees Cressida among other fair women in a temple, and is smitten by her charms. By no effort can he either suppress or conceal his love; and when at last he makes disclosure of it to his friend and companion Pándarus, the youthful uncle of the fair widow, that accommodating person promises to recommend him to the lady, to introduce him to her acquaintance, and otherwise to favour his suit. Chaucer's description of the way in which Pandarus sets about the business is a fine bit of comedy.

"Whan he was come unto his neces place,
 'Wher is my lady?' to hir folk seyde he;
 And they him tolde; and he forth in gan pace
 And fond two othere ladyes sete and she
 Withinne a pavèd parlour; and they three
 Herden a mayden reden hem the geste
 Of the sege of Thebes whyl hem leste.

Quod Pandarus—'Madame, God yow see,
 With al your book and al the companye!'
 'Ey! uncle myn; welcome ywis!' quod she,
 And up she roos, and by the hond in hye
 She took him faste, and seyde—'This night thrye
 (To goode mote it turn!) of yow I mette;
 And with that word she down on bench him sette.

‘Ye, nece, ye shal fare wel the bet,
 If God wole, al this yeer,’ quod Pandarus ;
 ‘But I am sory that I have yow let
 To herken of your book ye preysen thus ;
 For Goddes love, what seith it ? tell it us ;
 Is it of love ? O som good ye me lere !’
 ‘Uncle,’ quod she, ‘your maistresse is not here.’

With that they gonnen laughe ; and tho she seyde—
 ‘This romaunce is of Thebes that we rede,
 And we han herd how that king Laius deyde
 Thurgh Edippus his sone, and al that dede ;
 And here we stenten at these lettres rede,
 How that the bisshop, as the book can telle,
 Amphiorax, fil thurgh the ground to helle.’

Quod Pindarus—‘Al this knowe I myselve,
 And al thassege of Thebes, and the care ;
 For herof been ther maked bokes twelve :¹
 But lat be this, and tel me how ye fare :
 Do way your barbe, and show your face bare ;
 Do wey your book, rys up, and lat us daunce,
 And lat us don to May som observaunce.’

‘A ! God forbede !’ quod she ; ‘be ye mad ?
 Is that a wilwes lyf, so God you save ?
 Parde, ye maken me right sore adrad,
 Ye ben so wilde, it semeth as ye rave !
 It sete me wel bet ay in a cave
 To bidde, and rede on holy seyntes lyves :
 Lat maydens gon to daunce, and yonge wyves.’

‘As ever thryve I,’ quod this Pandarus,
 ‘Yet coude I telle a thing to doon you pleye.’
 ‘Now, uncle dere,’ quod she, ‘tel it us
 For Goddes love ! Is than thassege aweye ?
 I am of Grekes so ferd that I deye.’
 ‘Nay, nay,’ quod he, ‘as ever mote I thryve !
 It is a thing wel bet than swiche fyve.’”

It is, of course, Troilus's love for her ; but it is not without much finessing that he at last ventures to communicate the secret.

¹ The *Thebaid* of Statius, in twelve books,—a favourite with Chaucer.

Chaucer's elaborate description of the growth of Cressida's love for the prince is given with consummate art : it is a gradual and natural development, and, as we read, our sympathies are enlisted in the lady's favour. Pandarus's part is less creditable, but he is not the utterly despicable character that Shakespeare and popular tradition have for ever made him. His worldly wisdom, both in perception and in practice, and his good-natured cynicism, combine to make him an entertaining go-between, and afford a relief to the intense passion of the lovers. By a clever system of artful intrigues he brings the lovers together, Deiphobus and even Helen becoming unconscious instruments in his hands for that purpose. The plot, though long drawn out, is an extremely simple one. The joy of the lovers is interrupted by an arrangement for the exchange of Cressida for Antenor, a noble Trojan, who had been taken prisoner by the Greeks. She departs, vowing faithfulness to Troilus, and a speedy return. Troilus is nearly heartbroken at her departure, but is buoyed up with hopes of her return. As the period of her absence lengthens, he goes on hoping against hope, the dupe of many a disappointing to-morrow. Cressida never returns. She transfers her affections to the Grecian prince Diomedes, in obedience (as Chaucer kindly puts it) to an inevitable destiny ; and when Troilus has at last incontestable proof that she is lost to him, he carries his despair to the battlefield, and falls by the spear of Achilles.

“ And whan that he was slayn in this manere,
 His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
 Up to the holownesse of the seventh spere,
 In convers letinge every element ;
 And ther he saugh, with ful avysement,
 The erratik sterres, herkeninge armonye
 With sownes fulle of hevenish melodye.

And doun from thennes faste he gan avyse
 This litel spot of Erthe, that with the se
 Embraced is, and fully gan despyse
 This wrecched world, and held al vanitee
 To respect of the pleyn felicitee
 That is in hevene above ; and, at the laste,
 Ther he was slayn his loking doun he caste.

And in himself he lough right at the wo
 Of hem that wepten for his deeth so faste ;
 And dampned al our werk, that folweth so
 The blinde lust the which that may not laste,
 And sholden al our herte on hevene caste ;
 And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
 Theras Mercurie sorted him to dwelle. . . .

O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she,
 In which that love upgroweth with your age,
 Repeyreth hoom from worldly vanitee,
 And of your herte upcasteth the visage
 To thilke God that after his image
 Yow made ; and thinketh al nis but a fayre¹ ¹ *deceitful show.*
 This world, that passeth sone as floures fayre."

THE laurer-crowned Phebus with his hete
 Gan in his course ay upward as he wente
 To warmen of the Est See the waves wete,
The And Nisus doughter song with fresh entente,
forlorn And Nisus doughter song with fresh entente,
Lover. Whan Troilus his Pandare after sente ;
 And on the walles of the toun they pleyde
 To loke if they can seen ought of Criseyde. 7

Til it was noon they stoden for to see
 Who that ther come ; and every maner wight
 That cam fro fer, they seyden it was she
 Til that they coude knowen him aright.
 Now was his herte dul, now was it light.
 And, thus byjaped, stonden for to stare
 Aboute nought this Troilus and Pandare. 14

To Pandarus this Troilus tho seyde—
 "For ought I wot, bifor noon sikerly
 Into this toun ne comth not here Criseyde :
 She hath ynow to done hardily

To winnen from hir fader, so trowe I :
 Hir olde fader wol yet make hir dyne
 Er that she go,—God yeve his herte pyne !” 21

Pandare answerde—“It may wel be, certeyn ;
 And forthy lat us dyne, I thee biseche ;
 And, after noon, than mayst thou come ayeyn.
 And hoom they go withoute more speche,
 And comen ayein ; but longe may they seche
 Er that they finde that they after gape :
 Fortune hem bothe thenketh for to jape. 28

Quod Troilus—“I see wel now that she
 Is taried with hir olde fader so
 That, er she come, it wol neigh even be.
 Com forth, I wol unto the yate go.
 Thise portours been unkonninge evermo,
 And I wol doon hem holden up the yate
 (As nought ne were) although she come late.” 35

The day goth faste, and after that comth eve,
 And yet com nought to Troilus Criseyde.
 He loketh forth by hegge, by tree, by greve,
 And fer his heed over the wal he leyde.
 And at the laste he torned him, and seyde—
 Pardee, I woot hir mening now, Pandare !
 Almost, ywis, al newe was my care. 42

Now douteles this lady can hir good ;
 I woot she meneth ryden prively.
 I comende hir wysdom, by myn hood !
 She wol not maken peple nyce
 Gaure on hir whan she comth, but softly
 By nighte into the toun she thenketh ryde ;
 And, dere brother, thenk not longe tabyde. 49

We han nought elles for to doon, ywis.

And, Pandarus, now woltow trowen me?

Have here my trouthe, I see hir! yond she is!

Heve up thyn eyen, man! maystow not see?"

Pandare answerde—"Nay, so mote I thee!

Al wrong, by God! What seystow, man? wher art?

That I see yond nis but a fare-cart."

56

"Allas! thou seist right sooth," quod Troilus;

"But hardely it is not al for nought

That in myn herte I now rejoyse thus.

It is ayein som good, I have a thought.

Noot I not how, but sin that I was wrought

Ne felte I swich a confort, dar I seye.

She comth tonight, my lyf—that dorst I leye!"

63

Pandare answerde—"It may be, wel ynough";

And held with him of al that ever he seyde;

But in his herte he thoughte, and softly lough,

And to himself ful sobrelly he seyde—

"From hasel-wode, ther joly Robin pleyde,

Shal come al that that thou abydest here;

Ye, farewel al the snow of ferne yere!"

70

The wardein of the yates gan to calle

The folk which that withoute the yates were,

And bad hem dryven in hir bestes alle,

Or al the night they moste bleven there.

And fer within the night, with many a tere,

This Troilus gan hoomward for to ryde,

For wel he seeth it helpeth nought tabyde.

77

But natheles he gladded him in this,

He thoughte he misaccounted hadde his day,

And seyde—"I understonde have al amis ;
For thilke night I last Criseyde say
She seyde 'I shal ben here, if that I may,
Er that the mone, O dere herte swete,
The Lyon passe out of this Ariete.' 84

For which she may yet holde al hir biheste."
And on the morwe unto the yate he wente,
And up and doun, by west and eek by este,
Upon the walles made he many a wente ;
But al for nought—his hope alwey him blente.
For which at night, in sorwe and sykes sore,
He wente him hoom withouten any more. 91

This hope al clene out of his herte fledde ;
He nath wheron now lenger for to honge.
But for the peyne him thoughte his herte bledde,
So were his throwes sharpe and wonder stronge.
For, whan he saugh that she abood so longe,
He niste what he juggen of it mighte,
Sin she hath broken that she him bihighte. 98

The thridde, forthe, fifte, sixte day
After the dayes ten of which I told,
Bitwixen hope and drede his herte lay,
Yet somewhat trustinge on hir hestes olde.
But, whan he saugh she nolde hir terme holde,
He can now seen non other remedye
But for to shape him sone for to dye. 105

Therwith the wikked spirit, God us blesse !
Which that men clepeth wode Jalousye,
Gan in him crepe in al this hevinesse ;
For which, bycause he wolde sone dye,
He ne eet ne dronk for his malencolye,

And eek from every companye he fledde.
This was the lyf that al the tyme he ledde. 112

He so defet was that no maner man
Unnethe mighte him knowe ther he wente ;
So was he lene, and therto pale and wan,
And feble that he walketh by potente ;
And with his ire he thus himselven shente.
And whoso axed him wherof he smerte,
He seyde his harm was al aboute his herte. 119

Pryam ful ofte, and eek his moder dere,
His bretheren and his sustres goune him freyne
Why he so sorful was in al his chere,
And what thing was the cause of al his peyne.
But al for nought ; he nolde his cause pleyne,
But seyde he felte a grevous maladye
Aboute his herte, and fayn he wolde dye. 126

NOTES.

1. *The laurer-crownèd Phœbus.* Apollo, god of song and music, president of the Muses' Court, crowned with laurel. Phœbus, meaning bright or shining, is the name given to him in his character of *god of the sun.*

3. *the Est Sec.* The scene is laid in Troy, and the sea referred to is that part of the Mediterranean between Greece and the Troad.

4. *Nisus daughter.* The lark. Nisus was King of Megära, and son of Pandion. When Megara was besieged by Minos, Scylla, the daughter of Nisus, having fallen in love with Minos, aided her father's enemy in capturing the city, by plucking out of her father's head the golden or purple hair upon which her father's life depended. Minos, though thus enabled to take Megara, was horrified at Scylla's unnatural conduct, and sailed away in disgust. Scylla swam after the ship, when she was pounced upon by a sea-eagle (into which her father had

been transformed): she escaped the eagle by being metamorphosed into a small bird, Ciris, supposed to be a lark.

“Changed to a lark, she mottled pinions shook,
And, from the ravished lock, the name of Ciris took.”

(See Samuel Croxall's translation of the story in Ovid's *Metam.*, Bk. viii., Garth's edition, 1717.)

4. *with fresh entente.* With renewed vigour; with fresh charm.

5. *his Pandare after sente.* See Grammatical Note on Prepositions, p. xxxiii. Cf. with—

“And prevēly sente after Pandārus.”

—*Troil. and Cres.*, iii. 1585.

6. *pleyde.* Idled away their time.

18. *hardily.* Certainly. Cf. Prologue to *The Tales*—“For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe” (the Prioress).

19. *hir fader.* Calchas.

21. *give his herte pyne!* = Confound him! The exclamation of an impatient lover. *Pyne* is pain.

34, 35. “And I will make them keep the gate open even though she come late—though it be against the rules to do so.” With *up* in the sense of open, cf. “dupp'd the door” (*Hamlet*)—i.e., did up or opened the door; and Chaucer has “up the window dide” (*Miller's Tale*)—i.e., not raised but opened outwards the window. *As nought ne were.* As should or would not be.

42. “I was just about becoming really anxious again.”

45. *by myn hood!* Hood is probably here a form of head. Cf. (phonetically) godhead, womanhood.

46. *nycēly.* Curiously; perhaps foolishly, which is an earlier meaning.

49. *dere brother.* Shakespeare increases the age of Pandarus over that of Troilus, but there is no great disparity between their ages in Chaucer's story.

think not longe. Do not weary. The idiom is common in northern verse: it occurs in Burns—

“The muse, nae poet ever fand her
Till by himsel' he learnt to wander
Adoun some trottin' burn's meander,
An' no' think lang;
O sweet, to stray an' pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang!”

—*To William Simpson.*

50-56. The scene here presented is put with genuine dramatic liveliness. See *Midsummer Night's Dream*—

“The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.”

—Act V. sc. i.

58, 59. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*—

“My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne,
And all this day an unaccustomed spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.”

—Act V. sc. i.

63. *leye*. Wager.

65. *held with him of al*. Agreed with him in all.

66. *softely toungh*. Not only inaudibly, but also invisibly. Much of the character of Pandarus is expressed in this single touch.

68-70. He means that Troilus's expectation was foredoomed to disappointment. He had no ground for hope. Cressida's affections were transferred to another. She had forgotten him. *Hard woods shake* was a popular saying to signify “that's no news.”

joly Robin. Robin Hood, outlawed but living and fleeing the time carelessly in Sherwood forest. There is reference to the rimes of Robin Hood in Langland's poem of *Piers Plowman*, date probably 1377. It is the earliest notice of this the most popular of English heroes.

From hasel-wode . . . shal come' al that that thou abydest = “From absolutely no news shall come (if it come) all that you are expecting.”

74. *bleven* = be left, remain.

84. *Lyon . . . Ariete*. The sign or constellation of the Lion and of the Ram. The passage would occupy ten days or so.

88. *made he many a wente*. Took he many a walk. Words, sounding and even spelling alike, were lawful rimes with Chaucer if they had different meanings. See ll. 17, 18 of Prologue to *The Tales*, where *seke* (seek, visit) rimes to *seke* (sick, ill).

91. *withouten any more*. Simply that, and nothing else. It might mean—alone, unattended.

110. *for*. Because of.

120. Priam, King of Troy, his father; Hecuba his mother. Among his brothers were Hector, Paris, and Deiphobus; among his sisters Creusa and Cassandra. Helen was his sister-in-law.

121. *freyne*. Ask.

THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN.

THE last work upon which Chaucer was engaged, before the idea of his great poem on the Canterbury Pilgrimage occurred to him, was *The Legend of Good Women*. The idea, indeed, seems to have occurred to him when as yet he was scarcely half through his task upon the *Legend*, and to have been of sufficient force to attract him to it in a practical way at once. It may also be that the writing of the *Legend*, from the very nature of its plan, had grown tedious upon his hands, and that he was glad to escape from its monotony to the execution of a scheme that offered full scope to the play of his genius. At all events, *The Legend of Good Women*, which the poet had intended should celebrate nineteen women, maids or wives, who had been "true in loving all their lives," stops unfinished at the celebration of the ninth.

The poem, unfinished though it is, extends to pretty nearly 3000 lines, and is remarkable, among other ways, for the measure in which it is written. It is the first poem in the language in which the heroic couplet is employed. Chaucer had at last found a measure well fitted for the display of his powers as a narrative poet. He was not, however, its inventor, but its importer. He found it in France, where he had found so many of his metres, and was indebted for it to Guillaume de Machault.

The poem, or at least part of it, was very probably written in 1386, the author being then in his forty-sixth year. It was certainly of later date than *Troilus and Cressida* and *The House of Fame*, for the Prologue to the *Legend* contains an explicit reference to these as well as to most of his other poems up to date, and the reference implies that they were well known to the reading public. The Prologue is the most interesting part

of the unfinished work, both poetically and autobiographically. It reviews nearly the whole of the poet's career as an author, and gives many personal details of his character and habits. It shows not only that his art is now mature with practice, but that his heart, which was never bitter, is mellowing as he grows older. It shows him a more genial Chaucer, a kindlier delineator of female character, and a more devoted lover of nature in field and flower and open country.

In the Prologue Chaucer explains the origin of *The Legend*. He employs the old device of a dream. The winter months had shut him up among his precious books, but with the return of spring he lays them aside, and goes forth one morning to meet her and bid her welcome. Coming home at evening, tired but glad, he wanders forth in his dream to meadows where he had spent the day, and falls down on his knees in worship of the flower of flowers, the modest daisy. Cupid, hand in hand with "the good Alceste"—described as "crowned with white and clothed all in green,"—accompanied by a retinue of nineteen queenly women, attended in their turn by a train that might have numbered one third or one fourth of the whole human race, surprises him at his devotions, and sternly demands how he that maligned womankind in *The Romant of the Rose*, and taught their faithlessness in *Troilus and Cressida*, dares to offer homage to the symbol of woman's purity and truth. Before he can reply, "the good Alceste" pleads with Cupid in his behalf—

"I, your Alceste, whylom quene of Trace,
 I aske yow this man, right of your grace,
 That ye him never hurte in al his lyve ;
 And he shal sweren yow, and that as blyve,¹ ¹ *readily*.
 He shal no more agilten² in this wyse ; ² *offend*.
 But he shal maken,³ as ye wil devyse, ³ *make poems*.
 Of wemen trewe in loveinge al hir lyve,
 Wherso ye wil, of maiden or of wyve,
 And forthren yow, as much as he misseyde⁴ ⁴ *slandered*.
 Or in the *Rose* or elles in *Criseyde*."

The god of love can deny nothing to the white-crowned queen : he leaves the poet in her hands—"doth with him as yow leste." She listens, a little impatiently, to the poet's attempt at an excuse, and even a defence : "Lat be," she says, "thyn arguinge,

for Love wol nat be countrepleted," and proceeds to impose a penance. The penance is this—

"Thou shalt, whyl that thou livest, yeer by yere,
The moste party of thy tyme spende
In making of a glorious Legende
Of Gode Wommen, maidenés and wyves,
That weren trewe in lovinge al hir lyves."

Cupid observes that he has got off very lightly; and the poet suddenly recognises his favourite flower in the gentle queen, "that turned was into a dayesye." "Wel," he says,—

"Wel hath she quit me ¹ myn affeccoun ¹ paid me for.
That I have to hir flour!"

And with ardour he at once sets about the performance of his penance.

The task was abandoned before it was finished. Instead of nineteen, only nine good women are celebrated in *The Legend*, namely Cleopatra, Thisbe, Dido, Hypsipyle (and Medea), Lucretia, Ariadne, Philomela, Phyllis, and Hyperimnestra. Of the classical stories of these faithful unhappy heroines, the most poetical and pathetic in Chaucer's hands are perhaps the stories of Dido and Ariadne. Ovid supplied him with most of his material, but he treats it in his own way, suppressing here and adding there, altering and inventing obediently to his own good taste and tender heart.

From the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women.

AND as for me, thogh that I can but lyte,
On bokes for to rede I me delyte,

And to hem yeve I feyth and ful credence,
And in myn herte have hem in reverence
**Chaucer's
love for
the Daisy.**

So hertely that ther is game noon
That fro my bokes maketh me to goon,
But it be seldom on the holyday;
Save, certeynly, whan that the month of May

Is comen, and that I here the foules singe,
And that the floures ginnen for to springe— 10
Farewel my book and my devocioun !

Now have I than swich a condicioun
That, of alle the floures in the mede,
Than love I most thise floures whyte and rede
Swiche as men callen daisies in our toun.
To hem have I so greet affecioun,
As I seyde erst, whan comen is the May,
That in my bed ther daweth me no day
That I nam up and walking in the mede 20
To seen this floure agein the sonne sprede,
Whan hit upryseth erly by the morwe :
That blisful sighte softneth al my sorwe.
And, whan the sonne ginneth for to weste,
Than closeth hit, and draweth hit to reste,
So sore hit is afered of the night,
Til on the morwe that it is dayes light.

This dayesye, of alle floures flour,
Fulild of vertu and of alle honour,
And ever ylike fair and fresh of hewe,
As wel in winter as in somer newe, 30
Fain wolde I preisen, if I coude aright ;
But, wo is me ! it lyth nat in my might.
For wel I wot that folk han herbeforn
Of making ropen, and lad away the corn ;
And I come after, glening here and there,
And am ful glad if I may finde an ere
Of any goodly word that they han left.
And thogh it happen me rehercen eft
That they han in her fresshe songes sayd,
I hope that they wil nat ben evel apayd, 40

Sith hit is seide in forthering and honour
Of love—and eek in service of the flour,
Whom that I serve as I have wit or might.

She is the clernesse and the verray light
That in this derke world me wynt and ledeth ;
The herte, inwith my sorrowful brest, yow dredeth,
And loveth so sore, that ye ben verrayly
The maistresse of my wit, and nothing I.
My word, my werk, is knit so in your bonde
That, as an harpe obeyeth to the bonde, 50
And maketh hit sounne after his fingeringe,
Right so mowe ye out of myn herte bringe
Swich vois, right as yow list, to laughe or pleyne.
Be ye my gyde and lady sovereyne !
As to myn erthly god, to yow I calle,
Bothe in this werke and in my sorwes alle.

My bisy gost, that thrusteth alwey newe
To seen this flour, so yong, so fresh of hewe,
Constreyned me with so gledy desyr
That in my herte I fele yet the fyr 60
That made me to ryse er hit wer day—
And this was now the firste morwe of May—
With dredful herte and glad devocioun
For to ben at the resurrecioun
Of this fair floure, whan that it shulde unclose
Ageyn the sonne, that roos as rede as rose,
That in the brest was of the beste that day
That Agenores doghter ladde away.
And down on knees anonright I me sette,
And as I coud this fresshe flour I grette, 70
Kneling alwey, til hit unclosed was,
Upon the smale softe swote gras,

That was with floures swote embrouded al
 Of swich swetnesse and swich odour overal
 That, for to speke of gomme or herbe or tree,
 Comparisoun may noon ymaked be ;
 For hit surmounteth pleyonly alle odoures,
 And eek of riche beautee alle floures.
 Forgeten had the erthe his pore estat
 Of winter, that him naked made and mat, 80
 And with his swerd of cold so sore greved.
 Now hath the atempre sonne al that releved
 That naked was, and clad hit new agayn.
 The smale foules, of the seson fayn,
 That of the panter and the net ben scaped,
 Upon the fouler, that hem made awhaped
 In winter, and distroyed had hir brood,
 In his despyt hem thoughte it did hem good
 To singe of him, and in hir song despyse
 The foule cherl that for his covetyse 90
 Had hem betrayed with his sophistrye.
 This was hir song—"The Fouler we defye,
 And al his crafte!" And somme songen clere
 Layes of love, that joye it was to here,
 In worshipinge and preisinge of hir make.
 And, for the newe blisful somers sake,
 Upon the braunches ful of blosmes softe,
 In hir delyt, they turned hem ful ofte,
 And songen—"Blessed be seynt Valentyn!
 For on his day I chees yow to be myn, 100
 Withouten repenting, myn herte swete!"
 And therwithal hir bekes gonnen mete. . . .

And than they songen alle of oon acord—
 "Welcome, Somer, our governour and lord!"
 And Zephyrus and Flora gentilly

Yaf to the floures, softe and tenderly,
 Hir swote breeth, and made hem for to sprede,
 As god and goddesse of the floury mede ;
 In which methoghte I mighte day by day
 Dwellen althrough the joly month of May 110
 Withouten sleep, withouten mete or drinke.
 Adoun ful softely I gan to sinke,
 And, lening on myn elbowe and my syde,
 The longe day I shoop me for tabide
 For nothing elles, and I shal not lye,
 But for to loke upon the dayesye,
 That wel by reson men hit calle may
The dayesye or elles th' ye of day,
 The emperice and flour of floures alle !
 I pray to God that faire mot she falle, 120
 And alle that loven floures for hir sake !

NOTES.

1. *though that I can but lyte*. "Though I know only a little"—a modest statement. Chaucer was singularly well read—indeed, never ceased to be a student. Nothing could tear him away from his beloved books, except the charm of May-time. His library was at least three times larger than the studious Oxford clerk's: he had—

"Sixty bokes olde and newe
 . . . alle fulle of stories grete,
 That bothe Romains and eek Greekes trete,
 Of sondry wemen, which lyf that they ladde,—
 And ever an hundred gode ageyn oon badde."

—Prologue to *Legend*.

Among his favourite books were *The Romanant of the Rose*, and the poems of Machault; the *Metamorphoses* and the *Heroides* of Ovid, and the *Æneid* of Virgil; part of the works of Seneca; the *Thebaid* of Statius, and the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boethius (which he translated);

part of Cicero, and Macrobius's commentary on Scipio's dream : the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, and at least the verse if not the prose of Boccaccio—notably *The Teseide* and *The Filostrato*.

12. *swich a condicioun*. *I.e.*, of mind ; such a disposition, or peculiar fancy.

30. It "runs the whole circle of the year," as some one has said, "companion of the sun."

33-36. A beautiful metaphor of the harvest-field. *of making ripen*. Reaped the poetry ; said all the fine things that could be said on so charming a theme.

40. *evel apayed*. Ill-pleased.

45. *wynt*. Windeth ; turns, guides.

50, 51. A fine simile. Moore, the Irish poet, has a similarly beautiful but not just the same fancy in addressing the harp of his country :

"I was but as the wind passing heedlessly over,
And all the wild music it woke was thy own."

54. There is here, very probably, an allegorical compliment to the queen, Anne of Bohemia, whose marriage he had celebrated a few years before in *The Parlement of Foules*.

59. *gledy desyr*. Glowing desire. "Glede" is still in use in the northern dialect for glowing ember or spark of fire.

67, 68. Taurus, the bull ; referring to the rape of Europa, daughter of Agenor, who was carried off to Crete by Jupiter in the shape of a bull. The sun enters Taurus about the middle of April.

80. *mat*. Dejected, dispirited, dead. Cf.—

"Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so mat
That whylom weren of so gret estat."

—*The Knight's Tale*, ll. 97, 98.

81. (Winter's) *sweerd of cold*. See the same metaphor for frost in *The Squire's Tale*, l. 33, p. 193.

85. *the panter*. Old Fr. *pantiere*, bag-net for catching birds.

86. *awhaped*. Scared and bewildered ; dazed with terror.

95. *make*. Mate, match.

100. *I checs*. I chose. St Valentine's day, 14th February, about two months previously.

111. *shoop me*. Prepared, planned, proposed to myself ; lit., shaped.

120. *faire mot she falle!* One would have expected the dat. case of the pronoun : fairly (prosperously) may it happen to her (befall her) ! "Fair befall" and "fair fa'" (Northern form— occurring in Burns) are often met with : they are expressions of good wishes.

THE LEGEND OF ARIADNE.

JUGE infernal Minos, of Crete king,
Now cometh thy lot ; now comestow on the ring.
Nat only for thy sake writen is this story,
But for to clepe ageyn unto memory
Of Theseus the grete untrouthe of love ;
For which the goddes of the heven above
Ben wrothe, and wreche han take for thy sinne.
Be rede for shame ! now I thy lyf beginne.

Minos, that was the mighty king of Crete,
That wan an hundred citees stronge and grete, 10
To scole hath sent his sone Androgeus
To Athenes ; of the whiche hit happed thus,
That he was slayn, lerning philosophie,
Right in that citee, nat but for envye.

The grete Minos of the whiche I speke,
His sonnes dethe is come for to wreke,
And the citee besegeth harde and longe ;
But natheles, the walles be so stronge,
And Nisus, that was king of that citee,
So chevalrous, that litel dredeth he ; 20
Of Minos or his ost toke he no cure.
Til, on a day, befel an aventure,
That Nisus doghtre stode upon the walle,
And of the sege sawe the maner alle.

So happed hit, that at a scarmishing,
 She caste hir herte upon Minos the king,
 For his beaute, and for his chevalrye,
 So sore, that she wende for to dye.
 And, shortly of this proces for to pace,
 She made Minos winnen thilke place, 30
 So that the citee was al at his wille,
 To saven whom him lyst, or elles spille.
 But wikkedly he quytte her kindenesse,
 And let hir drenche in sorowe and distresse,
 Ner that the goddes had of hir pite ;
 But that tale were to longe as now for me.
 Athenes wanne this kinge Minos also,
 As Alcathoe and other tounes mo ;
 And this theffect, that Minos hath so driven
 Hem of Athenes, that they mote him given 40
 Fro yere to yere hir owne children dere
 For to be slayne, as ye shal after here.

This Minos hath a monstre, a wikked beste,
 That was so cruelle that withouten areste,
 Whan that a man was broght in his presence,
 He wolde him ete ; ther helpeth no defence.
 And every thridde yere, withouten doute,
 They casten lot, and, as hit came aboute,
 On riche, on pore, he most his sone take,
 And of his childe he moste present make 50
 To king Minos, to save him or to spille,
 Or lat his best devoure him at his wille.
 And this hath Minos doon right in despite,
 To wreke his sone was sette all his delite ;
 And maken hem of Athenes his thralle
 Fro yere to yere, while that he liven shalle ;
 And home he saileth whan this toun is wonne.
 This wikked custome is so longe yronne,

Until of Athenes king Egeus
 Mot sende his owne sone Theseus, 60
 Sith that the lot is fallen him upon,
 To be devoured, for grace is ther non.
 And forth is lad this woful yonge knight
 Unto the court of kinge Minos ful right,
 And in a prison fetred faste is he,
 Until the tyme he shulde yfreten be.

Wel maystow wepe, O woful Theseus,
 That art a kinges sone, and dampned thus !
 Me thinketh this, that thow depe were yholde
 To whom that savede the fro cares colde. 70
 And now if any woman helpe the,
 Wel oughtestow hir servant for to be,
 And ben hir trewe lover yere by yere !
 But now to come agayn to my matere.

The tour, ther this Theseus is ythrowe,
 Doun in the bothom derke, and wonder lowe,
 Was joininge to the walle of a foreyne,
 And hit was longinge to the doghtren tweyne
 Of king Minos, that in hir chambres grete
 Dwelten above toward the maistre strete 80
 In mochel mirthe, in joy and in solas.
 Wot I not how, hit happed ther, parcas,
 As Theseus compleyned him by nighte,
 The kinges doghtre that Adriane highte,
 And eke hir suster Phedra, herden alle
 His compleynt, as they stoden on the walle,
 And loked forth upon the brighte mone ;
 Hem liste nat to go to bedde sone.
 And of his woo they had compassioun ;
 A kinges sone to be in swiche prisoun, 90
 And be devoured, thoughte hem gret pitee.
 Than Adriane spake to hir suster free,

And seyde, "Phedra, leve suster dere,
 This woful lordes sone may ye not here,
 How pitously compleyneth he his kin,
 And eke his pore estat that he is in?
 And gilteles; certes now hit is routhe!
 And if ye wol assenten, by my trouthe,
 He shal be holpen, how so that we do."

Phedra answerde, "Ywis, me is as wo 100
 For him, as ever I was for any man;
 And to his help the beste rede I can
 Is that we doon the gayler prively
 To come and speke with us hastely,
 And doon this woful man with him to come;
 For if he may the monstre overcome,
 Than were he quyte; ther is noon other bote!
 Lat us wel taste him at his herte rote,
 That if so be that he a wepne have,
 Wher that he dar, his lyf to kepe or save, 110
 Fighten with this fende and him defende.
 For in the prison, theras he shal descende,
 Ye wite wel that the beste is in a place
 That nis not derke, and hath roume and eke space
 To welde an axe, or swerde, or staffe, or knyf,
 So that me thenketh he shulde save his lyf;
 If that he be a man, he shal do so.
 And we shal make him balles eke also
 Of wexe and towe, that, whan he gapeth faste,
 Into the bestes throte he shal hem caste, 120
 To sleke his hunger, and encombre his teeth.
 And right anoon whan that Theseus seeth
 The beste achoked, he shal on him lepe
 To sleen him or they comen more tohepe.
 This wepen shal the gayler, or that tyde,
 Ful prively within the prisoun hyde:

And, for the house is crinkled to and fro,
 And hath so queinte weyes for to go
 For it is shapen as the mase is wrought,
 Therto have I a remedy in my thoght, 130
 That by a clewe of twyne, as he hath goon,
 The same way he may returne anoon,
 Folwinge alway the threde, as he hath come.
 And whan that he this beste hath overcome,
 Thanne may he fleen away out of this stede,
 And eke the gayler may he with him lede,
 And him avaunce at home in his contree,
 Sin that so grete a lordes sone is he.
 This is my rede if that ye dar hit take ;
 What shulde I lenger sermoun of hit make ?" 140

The gayler cometh, and with him Theseus.
 And whan these thinges ben acorded thus,
 Adoun sit Theseus upon his knee ;
 "The righte lady of my lyf," quod he,
 "I, sorwful man, dampned to the deth,
 Fro yow, whiles that me lasteth lyf or breth,
 I wol not twinne aftir this aventure,
 But in youre servise thus I wol endure,
 That as a wrecche unknowe I wol yow serve
 For evermore, til that min herte sterve. 150
 Forsake I wol at home min heritage,
 And, as I sayde, ben of your courte a page,
 If that ye vouchesafe that, in this place,
 Ye graunte me to han so gret a grace,
 That I may han not but my mete and drinke ;
 And for my sustenaunce yet wol I swinke,
 Right as yow liste ; that Minos ne no wight,
 Sin that he saw me never with eighen sight,
 Ne no man elles shal me conne espye,
 So slyly and so wel I shal me gye, 160

And me so wel disfigure, and so lowe,
 That in this world ther shal no man me knowe,
 To han my lyf, and for to have presence
 Of yow, that doon to me this excellence.
 And to my fader shal I sende here
 This worthy man that now is your gaylere,
 And, him to guerdon, that he shal wel be
 Oon of the gretest men of my contree.
 And, if I durste sayn, my lady bright,
 I am a kinges sone and eke a knight ; 170
 As wolde God, yif that hit mighte be
 Ye weren in my contree alle three,
 And I with yow, to bere yow companye,
 Than shulde ye seen if that I therof lye !
 And, if I profre yow in low manere
 To ben your page and serven yow right here,
 But I yow serve as lowly in that place,
 I prey to Mars to yeve me such a grace,
 That shames dethe on me ther mote falle,
 And deth and povert to my frendes alle, 180
 And that my spirit by night mote go
 After my dethe, and walke to and fro,
 That I mote of a traytour have a name,
 For which my spirit mot go to do me shame !
 And yif I ever clayme other degre,
 But if ye vouchesafe to yeve hit me,
 As I have seyde, of shames deth I deye !
 And mercy, lady ! I can no more seye."

A semely knight was this Theseus to see,
 And yong, but of a twenty yere and three. 190
 But whoso hadde yseen his countenaunce,
 He wolde have wept for routhe of his penaunce :
 For which this Adriane in this manere,
 Answerde to his profre and to his chere.

"A kinges sone, and eke a knight," quod she.
 "To ben my servant in so low degre,
 God shelde hit, for the shame of wymmen alle,
 And leve me never such a cas befall! !
 And sende yow grace and sleight of herte also
 Yow to defende, and knightly sleen your fo! 200
 And leve hereaftir that I may yow finde
 To me and to my suster here so kinde,
 That I repente not to yeve yow lyf!
 Yet wer hit better that I were your wyf,
 Sin that ye ben as gentil borne as I,
 And have a realme nat but faste by,
 Then that I suffred you giltless to sterve,
 Or that I let yow as a page serve;
 Hit is not profet, as unto your kinrede.
 But what is that man wol not do for drede? 210
 And to my suster sin that hit is so
 That she mot goon with me if that I go,
 Or elles suffre deth as wel as I,
 That ye unto your sone as trewely
 Doon hir be wedded at your hom coming.
 This is the final ende of al this thing;
 Ye swere hit here, on al that may be sworn!"

"Yee, lady myn," quod he, "or elles torn
 Mote I be with the Minotaur to morwe!
 And have therof myn herte blood to borwe, 220
 Yif that ye wol! If I had knyfe or spere,
 I wolde hit leten out, and theron swere,
 For then at erst I wot ye wol me leve.
 By Mars, that is the chefe of my bileve,
 So that I mighte liven, and nat faile
 To morwe for tacheve my bataile,
 I nolde never fro this place flee
 Til that ye shuld the verray prefe see.

For now, if that the sothe I shal yow say,
 I have yow loved now ful many a day, 230
 Thogh ye ne wiste nat, in my contree,
 And aldermost desired yow to see,
 Of any erthly living creature.

Upon my trouthe I swere and yow assure
 These seven yere I have your servant be ;
 Now have I yow, and also have ye me,
 My dere herte, of Athenes duchesse !”

This lady smileth at his stedfastnesse,
 And at his hertly wordes and at his chere,
 And to hir suster sayde in this manere. 240

Al softlytely “ Now, suster myn,” quod she,
 “ Now be we duchesses both I and ye,
 And sikered to the regals of Athenes,
 And bothe herafter likly to be quenes,
 And saved fro his deth a kinges sone
 As ever of gentil wimen is the wone
 To save a gentilman, emforthe hir might,
 In honest cause, and namely in his right.
 Me thinketh no wight ought us hereof blame,
 Ne beren us therfor an evel name.” 250

And shortly of this matere for to make,
 This Theseus of hir hath leve ytake,
 And every poynt performed was in dede,
 As ye have in the covenant herd me rede ;
 His wepne, his clew, his thing that I have sayd
 Was by the gayler in the house ylayd,
 Theras this Minotaur hath his dwelling,
 Right faste by the dore at his entring,
 And Theseus is ladde unto his deth ;
 And forthe unto this Minotaur he geth, 260
 And by the teching of this Adriane,
 He overcom this beste and was his bane,

And out he cometh by the clewe agayn
Ful prively, when he this beste hath slayn ;
And by the gayler gotten hath a barge,
And of his wives tresor gan it charge,
And tok his wyf, and eke hir suster free,
And eke the gayler, and with hem alle three
Is stole away out of the lond by night,
And to the contre of Ennopye him dight, 270
Theras he had a frend of his knowinge.
Ther festen they, ther dauncen they and singe,
And in his armes hath this Adriane,
That of the beste hath kepte him from his bane.
And gat him ther a noble barge anoon,
And of his countre folke a grete woon,
And taketh his leve, and homward saileth he ;
And in an yle, amid the wilde see,
Theras ther dwelleth creature noon
Save wilde bestes, and that ful many oon, 280
He made his ship alonde for to sette,
And in that ile halfe a day he lette,
And sayde he on the londe moste him reste.
His mariners han don right as him leste ;
And, for to telle shortly in this cas,
Whan Adriane his wyfe aslepe was,
For that hir suster fairer was than she,
He taketh hir in his hond, and forth goth he
To shippe, and as a traitour stale his way,
While that this Adriane aslepe lay ; 290
And to his contreeward he saileth blyve,
(A twenty devel way the winde him dryve !)
And fond his fader drenched in the see.

Me lyste no more to speke of hym, pardee !
These false lovers, poison be her bane !
But I wol turne ageyn to Adriane,

That is with slepe for werinesse ytake ;
 Ful sorwfully hir herte may awake.
 Allas, for thee myn herte hath now pitee !
 Right in the dawening awaketh she, 300
 And gropeth in the bedde, and fond right neght.
 "Allas," quod she, "that ever I was wrought !
 I am betrayed ;" and hir heer to-rente,
 And to the stronde barfot fast she wente,
 And cryed, "Theseus, myn herte swete !
 Where be ye, that I may not with yow mete ?
 And mighte thus with bestes ben islain."
 The holowe rokkes answerde hir agayn.
 No man she saw, and yet shined the mone,
 And hye upon a rokke she wente sone, 310
 And saw his barge sailing in the see.
 Cold wex hir herte, and right thus saide she—
 "Meker than ye finde I the bestes wilde !"
 (Hath he not sinne, that hir thus begylde ?)
 She cried, "O turne agayn for routhe and sinne !
 Thy barge hath not al thy meiny inne."
 Hir kercheffe on a pole stiked she,
 Ascaunce that he shulde hit wel ysec,
 And him remembre that she was behinde,
 And turne agayn, and on the stronde hir finde.
 But al for noght ; his wey he is ygoon, 321
 And down she fil a-swown upon a stoon ;
 And up she rist, and kiste in al hir care
 The steppes of his feet, ther he hath fare,
 And to hir bedde right thus she speketh tho—
 "Thou bed," quoth she, "that hast receyved two,
 Thou shalt answerde of two and not of oon !
 Wher is the gretter part away ygoon ?
 Allas, wher shal I, wretched wyght, become ?
 For, thogh so be that ship or boot here come, 330

Hom to my contree dar I not for drede ;
I can not in this cas my selven rede."

What shulde I telle more hir compleining ?
Hit is so long hit were an hevy thing.
In hir epistil Naso telleth alle.
But shortly to the end I telle shalle.
The goddes have hir holpen for pitee,
And in the signe of Taurus men may see
The stones of hir coroun shine clere ;
I wol no more speke of this matere. 340
But thus this false lover can begyle
His trewe love ; the devel him quyte his while !

NOTES

1. *Juge infernal*. After his death, Minos, like his brother Rhadamanthus, became one of the judges in the lower world.

5. *Of Theseus the grete untrouth of love*. Referring to his desertion of Ariadne at Naxos.

7. As Minos deserted Scylla so Theseus deserted his daughter.

23. *Nisus doghter*. Scylla. See note to l. 4 of *Troilus and Criseyde*, p. 64.

35. By changing her into a lark (Ciris).

43. *a monstre, a wikked best*. The Minotaur, half man, half bull.

127-129. Referring to the labyrinth.

247. *unforthe hir might*. To the extent of her power. *Em* for *even*.

278. *an yle amid the wilde see*. Naxos (or Dia) in the Ægean sea, the largest of the Cyclades, halfway between Asia Minor and Greece.

313. A literal translation of the first line of Ovid's *Heroides*, Epist. X.—

"Mitius inveni, quam te, genus omne ferarum."

335. *Naso*. Ovid : *Heroides*, Epist. X.

THE FORMER AGE.

A BLISFUL lyf, a paisible and a swete
 Ledden the peples in the former age ;
They held hem payed of fruites that they ete,
 Which that the feldes yave hem by usage.
 They ne were nat forpampred with outrage ;
Unknowen was the quern and eek the melle ;
 They eten mast, hawes, and swich pounage,
And dronken water of the colde welle. 8

Yit nas the ground nat wounded with the plough,
 But corn upsprong unsowe of mannes hond,
The which they gniden, and eete nat half ynough ;
 No man yit knew the forwes of his lond ;
 No man the fyr out of the flint yit fond ;
Unkerven and ungrobbed lay the vyne ;
 No man yit in the mortar spyces grond
To clarre ne to sause of galantyne. 16

No mader, welde, or wood no litestere
 Ne knew—the flees was of his former hewe ;
No flesh ne wiste offence of egge or spere ;
 No coyn ne knew man, which was fals or trewe ;
 No ship yit karf the wawes grene and blewe ;
No marchaunt yit ne fette outlandish ware ;
 No trompes for the werres folk ne knewe,
No toures heye, and walles rounde or square. 24

What sholde it han avayled to werreye ?

Ther lay no profit, ther was no richesse.
But cursed was the tyme, I dar wel seye,
That men first dide hir swety bysinesse
To grobbe up metal, lurking in darknesse ;
And in the riveres first gemmes soghte.

Allas ! than sprong up al the cursednesse
Of covetyse, that first our sorwe broghte. 32

Thise tyraunts putte hem gladly nat in pres,
Ne wildnesse ne no busshes for to winne,
Ther poverte is (as seith Diogenes) ;
Theras vitaile is eek so skars and thinne
That noght but mast or apples is therinne ;
But theras bagges ben, and fat vitaile,
Ther wol they gon, and spare for no sinne
With al hir host the cite for tassaile. 40

Yit were no paleis chambres ne non halles :
In caves and in wodes softe and swete
Slepten this blissed folk withoute walles
On gras or leves in parfit quiete ;
No doun of fetheres ne no bleched shete
Was kid to hem, but in seurtee they slepte ;
Hir hertes were al oon, withoute galles,—
Everich of hem his feith to other kepte. 48

Unforged was the hauberk and the plate :
The lambish peple, voyd of alle vyce,
Hadden no fantasye to debate ;
But ech of hem wolde other wel cheryce.
No pryde, non envye, non avaryce ;
No lord, no taylage by no tyrannye ;
Humblesse and pees, good feith the emperice,
Fulfilled erthe of olde curtesye. 56

Yit was not Jupiter the likerous,
 That first was fader of delicacye,
 Come in this world ; no Nembrod, desirous
 To reynen, had not maad his toures hye.
 Allas ! allas ! now may men wepe and crye ;
 For in our dayes nis but covetyse,
 And doublesnesse, and tresoun, and envye, 63
 Poyssoun, manslaughter, and mordre in sondry wyse.

NOTES.

The stanza of this poem is the Spenserian stanza minus the last line : the measure is iambic pentameter, with the rhimes in the order *ababbcbc*. The same stanza is employed in *The Monk's Tale*.

5. *outrage*. Excess, or luxury. Old Fr. *oltrage* ; Lat. *ultra*, beyond.

17. "No dyer yet knew madder, weld, or woad." Weld is commonly known in England as dyer's rocket, or yellow weed. Madder dyes red, woad blue.

18. See on this point Thomson's *Golden Age* as given in *Spring (The Seasons*, ed. 1738) :—

"Nor had the spongy full-expanded fleece
 Yet drunk the Tyrian dye : the stately ram
 Shone thro' the mead in *native purple* clad
 Or milder *saffron*, and the dancing lamb
 The vivid *crimson* to the sun disclosed."

Thomson withdrew this grotesque fancy in his edition of 1746.

27-29. Cf. Milton (*Par. Lost*, i. 690-692)—

"Let none admire
 That riches grow in hell : that soil may best
 Deserve the precious bane."

32. The first half of this poem, ending at this line, is a paraphrase of one of the metrical sections of the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boethius, Bk. ii. Here is Chaucer's own prose translation : "Blisful

was the first age of men ! They holden hem apayed with the metes that the trewe felde broughten forth. They ne distroyede nor deceived nat hemself with outrage. They weren wont lightly to slaken hir hunger at even with acornes of okes. They ne coude nat medly the yifte of Bachus to the cleer hony ; ne they coude nat medle the brighte fleeses of the contree of Seriens with the venom of Tyre. They slepen hoolson slepes upon the gras, and drunken of the renninge wateres, and layen under the shadwes of the heye pyntrees. Ne no gest ne straungere ne carf yit the heye see with ores or with shippes ; ne they ne hadde seyn yit none newe strondes to leden marchaundyse into dyverse contrees. Tho weren the cruel clarious ful hust and ful stille ; ne blood, yshad by egre hate, ne hadde nat deyed yit armures. For wherto or which woodnesse of enemys wolde first moeven armes, whan they seyen cruel woundes, ne none nedes be of blood yshad ? I wolde that oure tymes sholde torne ayein to the olde maneres." By comparing this translation with the poetical paraphrase given above (ll. 1-32) the reader will see how closely the poet has followed the philosopher. The sixth stanza is also an enlargement of a hint in the same passage.

54. *taylage*. Taxation ; Fr. *tailler*, to cut. Tallage under the Anglo-Norman kings had a special meaning, but the word is used here in the general sense of tax.

56. This line has been supplied by Professor Skeat. The stanza is defective in the MS.

59. Nimrod, the mighty hunter ; to him was accredited the building of the Tower of Babel.

GOOD COUNSEL.

FLEE fro the prees, and dwelle with sothfastnesse ;
Suffyce thyn owne good, though hit be smal ;
For hord hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse,
Prees hath envye, and wele blent overal :
Savour no more than thee bihove shal ;
Reule wel thyself, that other folk canst rede ;
And Trouthe shal deliver, hit is no drede. 7

Tempest thee noght al croked to redresse,
In trust of hir that turneth as a bal :
Gret reste stant in litel besinesse :
And eek be war to sporne ageyn an al ;
Strive noght as doth the crokke with the wal.
Daunte thyself, that dauntest otheres dede ;
And Trouthe shal deliver, hit is no drede. 14

That thee is sent receyve in buxumnesse,
The wastling for this worlde axeth a fal.
Her is non hoom, her nis but wildernesse ;
Forth, Pilgrim, forth ! Forth, beste, out of thy stal !
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al ;
Hold the hye wey, and lat thy gost thee lede ;
And Trouthe shal deliver, hit is no drede. 21

Lenvoy.

Therfor, thou vache, leve thyn old wrecchednesse ;

Unto the worlde leve now to be thral :

Crye Him mercy, that of his hy goodnesse

Made thee of noght, and in especial

Draw unto Him, and pray in general

For thee, and eek for other, hevenlich mede ;

And Trouthe shal deliver, hit is no drede.

28

NOTES.

4. *welc blent ower al*. Prosperity blinds (deceives) everywhere. *Blent* = blendeth (blindeth) ; so *rist* = riseth, &c.

5. "Care for no more than is needful for thee."

9. Trusting to fortune.

11. Cf. "to kick against the pricks."

12. *as doth the crokke with the wal*. As does the earthen pot or pipkin with the stone wall. Cf. the Eastern proverb "If the stone fall on the pitcher, wo to the pitcher ; if the pitcher fall on the stone, wo to the pitcher ; whatever befall, wo to the pitcher !"

13. *Daunte*. Subdue (through fear).

otheres dede. Others so much or so completely ; *dede* = dead.

18. *beste*. Beast : see l. 22 below — *rache*. Earthly-minded person that, like a quadruped, looks downward.

THE POET TO HIS EMPTY PURSE.

To you, my Purse, and to non other wight
Compleyne I, for ye be my lady dere.
I am so sory, now that ye be light ;
For, certes, but ye make me hevy chere,
Me were as leef be leyd upon my bere ;
For whiche unto your mercy thus I crye—
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye !

7

Now voucheth sauf this day, or hit be night,
That I of you the blisful soun may here,
Or see your colour, lyk the sonne bright,
That of yelownesse hadde never pere.
Ye be my lyf, ye be my hertes stere,
Quene of comfort and of good companye :
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye !

14

Now, Purs, that be to me my lyves light
And saveour, as doun in this worlde here,
Out of this toune help me through your might,
Sin that ye wol nat been my tresorere ;
For I am shave as nye as any frere ;
But yit I pray unto your curtesye—
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye !

21

Lenvoy.

O Conquerour of Brutes Albion,
 Which that by lyne and free eleccioun
 Ben verray King, this song to you I sende ;
 And ye, that mowen al our harm amende,
 Have minde upon my supplicacioun ! 26

NOTES.

10. *your colour.* Gold.

12. *my hertes ster.* The guide (or helmsman) of my heart. The metaphor is from the art of steering a ship.

16. *as.* In respect of.

19. *shave as nyce as any frere.* As closely shaven as a friar—*i.e.*, bare, destitute of money.

22. The king, Henry IV., son of the poet's old patron, John of Gaunt. The poem belongs to the year 1399, the year of Henry's succession. *Brutes Albion.* Referring to the fiction of Geoffrey of Monmouth that Britain was named from Brutus, the descendant of Æneas, prince of Troy.

26. And so he had, granting him immediately a pension. (See Chronological Notes, p. xi, and Life, p. xx.)

GLOSSARY OF WORDS AND FORMS

NOW MOSTLY OBSOLETE OR USED IN A SPECIAL OR
PECULIAR SENSE.

a, in.
a! ah!
abasshed (of), confounded at.
abeye, pay for.
ablakeberied, astray.
abrayde, started.
abyde, expect.
abye, pay for, buy.
achaat, purchases, contracts.
achatours, buyers, caterers, purveyors.
acord, agreement, arrangement, tune.
affrayeth, excites, arouses.
affyle, file, make smooth.
after, according to, in imitation of; towards; for.
agayns, in presence of.
ageyn, against.
agrief, amiss, in sorrow.
agryse, shudder, tremble, feel horrified.
aguiler, needle- or bodkin-case.
al, although.
aley, alley.
algates, quite; at any rate.
aller, of all; our aller=of us all.
alouterly, absolutely.
alswa, also.
altherbest, best of all.
amblere, ambling horse, pony.
amorwe, on the morrow.
and, if.

anes, once.
anight, at night.
anlas, sheath-knife, double-edged dagger.
anon, at once; anonright, right off, immediately.
antiphoner, hymnal, anthem-book.
apayd, pleased; evil apayd, ill-content.
apese, appease, pacify.
arest, rest (for a spear).
areste, rein in, stop; arrest, seizure.
argued, communed, considered.
Ariete, Aries, the Ram (in the zodiac).
aright, rightly.
aroume, at large.
artow, art thou.
aryve, arrival, disembarkation of troops.
as=please, pray, do.
ascaunce, as if.
aslaked, assuaged, lessened.
asp, aspen.
aspye, spy.
asterte, escape.
astoned, astonished.
astored, stored, provided.
astrolabie, astrolabe, an instrument for "taking the stars."
asweved, dazed.

atake, overtake.
 atones, at once.
 attamed, broached, set agoing.
 attempre, temperate, mild.
 augrim (stones), counters.
 Austin, (St) Augustine.
 avaunce, advantage, be profitable; promote.
 avaunt, vaunt, boast.
 avauntour, braggart.
 aventaille, helmet—lower front half.
 avisoun, vision, dream.
 avouterye, adultery.
 avowef, proclaim, tell to every-body.
 avoy (on), fie (on) !
 avys, advice, consideration.
 avyse (us), consider (with ourselves), bethink.
 avysed, forewarned; wary, careful.
 avysement, deliberation.
 awhaped, scared, terrified, stupefied with fear.
 axe, ask.

bachelor, young fellow, aspirant to knighthood.
 bale, sorrow, misfortune.
 balled, bald, bare.
 bane, death.
 barbe, barb, part of head-dress of a woman.
 barme, lap, bosom.
 basting, lacing.
 batailled, embattled, notched.
 bathe, both.
 baudy, soiled, dirty.
 bawdrik, baldric, shoulder-belt.
 be, been.
 become, go to.
 bede, proffer.
 bedrede, bedridden.
 beer, bore.
 beet, beat, bordered.
 beggestere, beggar-woman.
 bek, beak.
 bel ami (Fr.), good friend, fine fellow.
 bemes, trumpets.

bencite, *benedicite* (bless the Lord !)
 bene, bean.
 bereth (him), comports himself.
 bering, bearing, behaviour.
 berne, barn.
 beseye, to look at; wel beseye = fair to behold.
 bet, better, faster, quickly.
 bete, shape by beating.
 beye, buy.
 bidaffed, befooled.
 bifore, in front of.
 biform, in front (before).
 bigonne, begun, headed.
 bihete, promise; *also* bihote.
 bihighte, promised.
 biknewe, confessed.
 bile, bill, beak.
 binne, corn-chest.
 bireve, bereave, remove.
 biset, used up.
 bisette, used, employed.
 bisily, eagerly.
 bisinesse, activity.
 bismotered, be-smutted, soiled, worn.
 bit (biddeth), commands.
 biwreyest, revealest.
 blake (pl.), black; *blak is the sing. form.*
 blente, blinded, deceived.
 blere, blear, dim.
 bleven, remain, be left.
 bleynte, blenched, started.
 blinde, blind; blind lane = cul-de-sac.
 blive, soon.
 blondren, to become dazed; to go wrong.
 bode, announcement.
 body, self.
 boes, behoves.
 bonde, service, bond.
 boon, bone.
 boost, loud talk, boast.
 boras, borax.
 bord, board, table.
 borwe, borrow; pledge.
 bote, remedy, (boot), benefit, good.

botel, bottle, bundle (of hay).
 boteler, cup-bearer.
 bountee, goodness.
 bour, inner chamber.
 bourde, jest.
 bracer, an archer's arm-guard,
 a bracer.
 braun, brawn.
 breme, furiously.
 bren, bran.
 brende, burned.
 breres, briars, underwood.
 brest, bursts.
 bretful, full to the brim, crammed
 (with).
 briddes, birds, young (of birds).
 broche, any small ornament (as
 pin, locket, &c.)
 brouke, enjoy, have the use of.
 Browding, embroidery, trappings
 or mountings.
 broyded, braided.
 bulles, papal bulls; lead balls,
 with seal, affixed to a docu-
 ment.
 burdoun, bass-accompaniment.
 burel (or borel), coarse, common,
 illiterate, lay.
 businesse, industry, work, ac-
 tivity.
 busk, bush.
 buskes, bushes.
 but, unless; but; on the contrary.
 butif, unless.
 buxumnesse, obedience, willing-
 ness, cheerfulness.
 by, by means of, through.
 byde, wait.
 bying, buying.
 byjaped, befooled, tricked.
 byte, bite, nip, eat.

 camaille, camel.
 can, know, knows; is able, has
 skill.
 capel, horse.
 capul, horse.
 cardiacle, pain at the heart.
 care, grief.
 careyne, corpse, flesh.
 carf, cut, carved (the meat).

carl, fellow, churl.
 carpe, talk, chat.
 cas, adventure, affair, occasion.
 caste, considered; contrived.
 celerer, keeper of the wine-cellar
 (in a monastery).
 celle, cell, monastery.
 certes, certainly.
 ceruce, white lead.
 ceynt, cincture, waist-belt.
 chace, pursue, go on with.
 chalons (Fr. town of Chalons),
 blankets or bed-cover; shal-
 loon.
 chanoun, canon.
 chapman, merchant; supercargo.
 chapmanhede, trade or business.
 chaunterye, endowment to pay
 for masses.
 chelaundre, lark.
 Chepe, Cheapside.
 chere, countenance, look, ex-
 pression; manners.
 chevâchee, feat of horsemanship,
 exploit.
 cheventein, chieftain or captain.
 chevisaunce, borrowing, dealings
 (for profit).
 chivachye, cavalry expedition.
 chivalrye, knighthood, profession
 of a knight.
 clarre, clarified wine.
 clause, a few words.
 cleped, called.
 clergeon, chorister-boy.
 clerk, scholar, student.
 clos, enclosure, yard.
 closing, boundary.
 cloutes, bits of cloth, rags (sc.
 relics).
 cofre, box.
 cokkes, God's.
 col, coal, having black marks.
 colera (Lat.), choler, temper.
 colfox, coal or cur fox, a variety
 with black-tipped tail.
 collacion, conference.
 commune, common.
 comper, comrade, close friend.
 composicioun, agreement.
 confeture, composition.

- conne, be able, can.
- conning, skill, learning.
- conscience, sensibility, feeling.
- conseil, private desire, secret.
- constable, governor.
- conteks, contests, fights.
- convers, reverse; in convers = on the reverse side.
- conyes, rabbits.
- cop, ridge, top.
- cope, cape, cloak.
- corage, desire.
- corages, hearts.
- corny, well malted.
- corpus bones! (By) the bones of His body!
- corven, cut, carved.
- costeying, coasting.
- couched, laid.
- counseil, counsel, opinion; confidence.
- counterfete, imitate.
- countertaille, countertally (coming in answer).
- countour, auditor.
- countour (house), counting-room.
- courtepy, coat, short overcoat.
- couth, coude, known, famous; knew, knew how.
- covent, convent.
- covyne, collusion.
- crakked, talked.
- crekes, crooked devices, wiles.
- crinkled, full of windings and turnings.
- Cristofre, image of St Christopher (badge or brooch).
- croper, crupper (back — behind the saddle).
- croppes, shoots, tops.
- croys, cross.
- crulle, curled, curly.
- cryke, creek, inlet.
- culpons, shreds, hanks, portions.
- cunning, skill.
- curious, eager, sharp.
- cursen, curse, excommunicate.
- Cutberd, St Cuthbert.
- daliaunce, gossip, pleasantry.
- dampned, condemned.
- darreyne, decide right to.
- dasen, daze, are dimmed.
- daswed, dazed, dimmed.
- daun, lord.
- daunger, power, jurisdiction.
- daungerous, forbidding, harsh, haughty, "stand-offish."
- debate, quarrel.
- debonaire, well-mannered, gentle.
- decoped, cut (in openwork patterns).
- dede, become stupefied.
- dede, stagnant.
- deedly, deathlike, hollow.
- deel, bit, part; never a deel, not at all.
- dees, dice.
- defaute, fault, check (in hunting).
- defended, forbade.
- defet, defeated, cast down.
- defye, have no faith in, distrust.
- degree, rank.
- delicacye, luxury.
- deliver, clever, nimble, active.
- departe, part, separate.
- dere, harm.
- derne, secret.
- despence, expense.
- despitous, contemptuous.
- devel (way), in the way of the devil, to destruction.
- devoir, duty.
- devys, direction.
- devyse, tell, describe.
- deye, dairy-woman.
- deynte, valuable, fine.
- deynteuous, dainty.
- deys, dais, platform.
- dich, ditch.
- dide of, doffed.
- dighte, prepare; betake (oneself); dress.
- digne, worthy, honourable; repellent, disdainful.
- dischevele, with hair hanging down.
- disclaundred, slandered.
- discure, discover, show.
- disese, displeasure, distress, discomfort.
- dispence, expenditure.

dispoilen, undress.
disport, sport, pleasantry, amusement.
dissimulinges, dissemblings.
distreyne, constrain, afflict.
distreyneth, clutches, grasps.
divyninge, opinion, conjecture.
don or doon, do, cause, make.
dormant (table), fixed or permanent sideboard.
dortour, dormitory.
doth, causes.
doughty, valiant.
doune, dun-coloured.
douve, dove.
drawe, come or incline to, accept, agree to.
drecched, troubled.
dredful, timid.
dresse, station or set (in order), prepare, array, direct.
drogges, drugs.
drogh, drew.
drough, drew.
druerye, affection.
drye, endure, suffer.
dun, the dun horse.

echon, each one.
eek, also.
effect, sequel; reality. *In effect* = in fact.
eftsone, by-and-by, soon.
egge, edge, sword.
egre, eager, fierce, sharp.
eighen sight, eyesight.
elenge, miserable.
eletuaries, electuaries (medicines that dissolve in the mouth).
embosed, plunged into the thicket.
embrouded, embroidered, decorated.
emeraude, emerald.
emforth, to the extent of.
emperice, empress, queen.
empryse, enterprise.
enclyne, yield or give place.
encombred, stuck fast; burdened.
encressed, increased.
endure, stay, continue.

endyte, compose, write, tell, sing.
engendrure, generation.
engyned, tortured.
entayled, entailed, cut, sculptured.
entente, purpose.
envyned, supplied with wine, having a wine-cellar.
er, before.
ered, ploughed, arable.
eres, ears.
erne, grieve (yearn).
erst, before.
esed, eased, entertained.
estaat, period of power, government.
estat, state, condition.
esy, easy, moderate, gentle.
evangyles, gospels.
evene, average; closely, regularly, with constancy.
everichon, every one.
ew, yew.
exametron, hexameter.
excited, incited.
ey, egg.
ey! eh!
eyleth, ails.

facound, speech, eloquence.
faire, fairly, beautifully.
fairnesse, beauty or honesty of life.
falding, a kind of coarse cloth.
falle, befall, happen.
famulier, familiar, intimate, at home.
fan, vane, quintain.
fare, business, bustle, ado.
fare-cart, travelling-cart.
faren, fare, behave, get on.
farsed, filled, stuffed.
fauned, fawned on.
fayn, glad; gladly.
fele, feel; many.
fendly, fiendlike, merciless.
ferde, fear.
fermerere, friar in charge of an infirmary.
ferne, distant; past.
ferre, farther; also fer.

ferthing, speck, small portion.

fest, fist.

fet, fetched.

fetisly, neatly.

fey, faith.

figure, illustration.

finding, providing.

fleen, fleas.

flees, fleece.

floytinge, fluting, playing on a flute.

fneseth, snorts, breathes heavily.

foly, foolishly.

fond, found, provided for.

fonde, try.

fonne, fool.

foo, foe.

foot mantel, wrap (protecting the skirt).

for, because, notwithstanding, from.

forby, by, past.

fordronke, dead drunk.

fore, path; example.

forlete, lose utterly, yield.

forloyne, note for recall of the hounds.

formel, companion.

former, maker, Creator.

formcast, forecast, foretold.

forneys, furnace.

forpyned, tortured, starved, wasted.

fors (force), matter, account

forthren, further, advance.

forthy, therefore.

forwaked, tired out with watching.

forward, agreement, arrangement.

forwes, furrows.

forwhy, because.

for hoot, immediately.

foudre, thunderbolt.

foul, bird.

foundred, stumbled, foundered.

fowles, birds.

foyne, thrust.

frankeleyns, franklins, country gentlemen.

frayneth, entreats, beseeches.

freyne, question, ask.

fulfild, quite full.

fyne, finish, cease.

fynt, findeth.

fyr, fire.

gan, began; did.

ganeth, gapeth, yawns.

garget, throat.

gas, goes (*Scotch*).

gattothed, having the teeth well apart.

gaude, gaud, toy, trick.

gaure, stare.

gayneth, avails, avail.

geaunt, giant.

gentil, gentle, worthy, excellent; respectable-looking.

gere, gear, apparatus (as table requisites).

geres, changeful ways.

gerner, granary.

gery, changeable.

gesse, imagine.

gest, guest, visitor.

geste, romance, tale, history; exploit.

gigging, fitting with straps or handles. Fr. *guigue*.

gin, engine, contrivance, trap.

ginnen, begin.

gipoun, doublet, tunic.

gipser, pouch, purse.

girdelstede, waist.

girles, young people (male or female).

glade, gladden, comfort.

gledy, glowing, ardent.

glose, comment, exaggeration, flattery.

glosen, interpret; flatter.

gniden, rubbed.

gnof, thief, churl, fellow.

gnow, gnawed.

go, walk (as a ghost).

go bet, go as quickly as possible.

gobet, piece, morsel.

goldhewen, hewn out of gold.

goliardeys, boaster, braggart, prating buffoon.

gonne, proceeded, began; did.

good, goods, property.
 gost, goest; ghost.
 gourde, bottle, flask.
 graunt mercy (Fr.), best thanks.
 grave, engrave.
 grete, sum and substance.
 grette, greeted, saluted.
 greves, groves; branches.
 grille, rough, horrible.
 grinde, grinned(?), made a grinding sound.
 grisly, awful.
 grope, test, examine; grip at, search for.
 ground, texture.
 grucche, grudge, murmur at.
 gryns, gray; gray fur.
 gunne, did, began (a variant of *gan*).
 gye, guide, conduct (oneself).
 gyle, guile, trick, treachery.
 gyse, way.

habergeoun, hauberk, jack.
 hakeney, old horse.
 halfe, side, name.
 halle, kitchen, public room.
 halt, holds.
 halwes, saints, shrines.
 han, have.
 harde (grace), ill-luck.
 hardily, certainly.
 harlotryes, ribaldry, vice, immoral jests.
 harneys, harness, weapons, armour.
 harneysed, harnessed, equipped, furnished.
 harre, hinge.
 hasardour, gamester.
 hastify, hastily.
 haunt, abode; practice, skill, reputation.
 haunteden, frequented, practised.
 hauteyn, loud.
 hawe, haw, yard.
 hay, hedge.
 heer, here.
 held, agreed.
 hele, health.

helpen, holpen, helped, healed.
 hem, them.
 hende, courteous, gentle (gentleman).
 hente, receive, obtain; caught.
 heraud, herald.
 herbeforn, herebefore.
 herbergh, inn, dwelling.
 herberwe, harbour.
 herd, haired.
 herde, shepherd.
 herieth, praiseth.
 hernes, corners.
 hertespoon, breast-bone.
 heste, command, behest.
 hete, was called.
 hethen, hence.
 hethenesse, heathen lands.
 hething, contempt.
 heve, heave, raise by force.
 heve, cast.
 heved, head.
 hewe, complexion, colour.
 hewed, coloured.
 highte, was called.
 hindreste, hindermost, last.
 hir, their.
 holt, wood, plantation.
 hoo, (hue or) cry, exclamation for silence.
 hood, head.
 hool, whole; cured.
 hoolly, entirely.
 hoor, hoary, gray.
 hope, expect, fear.
 hostelrye, inn, lodging.
 hostiler, innkeeper.
 houped, whooped, shouted.
 housbondrye, economy.
 hunte, huntsman.
 hurtleth, pushes, dashes.
 hye, hie, hasten.
 hyne (hind), servant on farm, ploughman.
 idus, ides.
 ilke, same.
 in, inn, lodging, house.
 in, among.
 inde, dark blue, Indian blue, indigo.

infect, of no effect.

ire, passion, jealousy.

irous, irascible, fierce-tempered,
angry.

jangler, incessant talker.

jape, trick, jest.

jet, mode, fashion.

jossa! (Fr.), down here!

Joves, Jove, Jupiter.

joynant, adjoining.

jugement, decision.

justen, joust, tilt.

justyse, judge; justice.

juyse, judgment, sentence.

kepe, take care (of), watch;
catch; *as a noun*, heed or
charge.

keper, guardian, head.

kid, known.

kinde, nature.

kitte, cut.

knarre, muscular or thick-set
fellow.

knave, boy, servant-lad.

knowes, knees.

kynde, nature, instinct.

kythe, show, make known.

laas, lace, cord; snare, net.

lafte, left off, omitted, neglected.

langour, languishing, slow starv-
ation.

lasse, less.

last, lasteth, extends.

lathe, barn, shed.

latoun (pewter or pinchbeck),
brass, latten, tin-plate.

laude, praise; service of praise.

launde, lawn.

lay, faith, creed.

layneres (lanyards), thongs,
laces.

lazar, poor person, beggar;
leper.

leche, leech, doctor, physician.

leed, lead; a copper or boiler.

leef, willing, ready; dear.

leef, love, lover, lady-love.

leep, leaped.

leet (pace), let pass, neglected;
left.

lemes, flames.

lene, lend.

lere, teach, learn.

lesing, losing; falsehoods.

lest, lust, pleasure.

leste, liste, (it) pleased; least.

lete, leave.

leten, draw.

lette, hinder, interrupt, wait.

lette (n. let), hindrance, delay.

leve, believe; dear; allow.

lever, dearer.

levesel, shed or thatched pent-
house, arbour, bunch of leaves
(inn-sign).

lewed, illiterate, lay.

ley, lay.

liche, like.

lief, dear.

lige, liege; vassal (*lige man*).

lighte, alight, descend.

lightly, quickly.

likerous, sensual.

limitour, a friar licensed to beg
within a district.

lipsed, lisped, spoke affectedly.

litarge, ointment (of protoxide
of lead).

litestere, dyer.

lodemenage, pilotage, pilot's
dues.

logge, lodge, roosting-place.

lone, loan, gift, grace.

longeth, belongeth.

lord, master, employer; king.

lordinges, masters, sirs.

lordshipe, protection.

lorn, lost, missing.

loth, odious, painful, displeas-
ing.

lough, laughed.

lustiheed, enjoyment.

lusty, pleasant, vigorous.

lyketh, pleases.

lykly, probable.

lymeres, hounds in leash.

lymes, limbs.

lynde, lime-tree, linden.

lyne, descent, ancestry.

lys, lily.
lyte, little, small, poor.

maister, master ; abbot.
maistrye, excellence, elegance.
make, mate, match.
making, poetising ; poetry.
male, (mail) bag, wallet.
mark, coin of the value of 13s. 4d.
in England.

mased, bewildered.

mat, dead, dispirited.

maugre, in spite of

maunciple, steward, purveyor.

mawe, stomach.

mede, reward ; meadow ; mead
(drink).

medle, mixed, of a mixed colour.

meiny, retinue, men.

melle, mill.

memorie, consciousness.

men, one (followed by a sing.
verb) ; people, you.

meridional, southern.

merlyon, small hawk, merlin.

meschaunce, ill-luck ; evil oc-
currence.

meschief, misfortune, calamity,
tribulation.

mesurable, moderate, temperate.

mesure, moderation ; plan.

mete, meet ; dream ; meat ;
equal ; fit.

metely, well-proportioned.

mette, dreamt.

meynee, household, retainers, fol-
lowers.

ministres, officers.

miscarie, go astray.

mister, trade, occupation.

mo, more.

moche, much ; great ; size.

mood, anger.

moot, notes on a horn.

mortal, deadly, sanguinary.

mot, may, must ; *also* moot.

mote, may.

motteleye, motley ; parti-col-
oured attire.

motyf, idea ; suspicion.

mountance, amount, quantity.

moustre, pattern.

mowe, can, may.

multiplie, to make gold and
silver by alchemy.

myte, smallest coin, mite, far-
thing.

nad, had not.

nadde, had not, did not.

nadstow, didst thou not.

nakers, kettle-drums.

nam, am not.

namely, especially.

namo, no other, no (one) else.

narwe, small ; half-shut ; close-
set.

nat, not ; know not (*ne wot*).

natheles, nevertheless.

nedle, bodkin (for leading a
lace).

needes or nedes, of necessity.

neet (neat), cattle.

Nembrod, Nimrod.

nempnen, to name.

ner, near, nearer ; sooner.

nerre, were (there) not, were not,
wert not.

newe, new, beginning afresh.

nightertale, night-season.

nin, nor in, not in.

nobleye, nobility, nobles ; state,
splendour.

noide (*ne wolde*), would not,
could not.

nones (nonce), occasion.

noot (*ne wot*), know not.

nosethirles, nostrils.

not, know not.

note, job, task, business.

notheed, crop-head.

nother, nor other ; neither.

nothing, not at all.

nought, not.

nowches, jewels.

Nowel ! Noël ! Christmas.

noyous, annoying, troublesome.

ny, near.

nyce, scrupulous, sensitive ; fool-
ish.

nycetee, simple cunning, sim-
plicity.

- o**, one, a.
observaunce, respects, homage ; ceremony.
observe, favour.
of, from, by, in respect of ; off.
offring, voluntary contributions.
oght, at all.
olde, former.
oned, united, centred.
onlofte, aloft, up.
oo, one, a.
ook, oak.
oon, one, the same (scale or pattern).
oothes, solemn assurances, oaths.
organ (Lat. *organa*), organs, organ.
orisons, prayers.
orlogge, horologe, timepiece.
outher, either.
outrydere, horseman.
overal, everywhere.
overlad, outstepped ; "put upon."
oversloppe, upper garment.
oweth, owns.

paire, pair, variety.
palled, pale.
pan, skull, head.
panter, bag-net.
papingay, woodpecker.
parage, birth.
pardee (*pardieu*), indeed.
pardee (Fr.), certainly, I swear.
pardoner, seller of indulgences.
parements, splendid mantles ; rich hangings.
parfournest, performest, fulfill-est.
parisshens, parishioners.
paritorie, pellitory.
parte, side, party.
parvys, porch (of St Paul's).
pas, pace, at a foot-pace.
passeth, continues.
passing, superior, excellent.
patente, open letter, public certificate, patent.
patron, pattern.

payd, paid, satisfied.
payens, pagans, heathen.
penaunt, penitent, one doing penance.
pens, pence, money.
penyble, inured (to penance).
pers, Persian blue, azure ; cloth of a light-blue colour.
persoun, parson, resident clergyman.
pert (for *apert*), openly.
pert, brisk, forward ; open.
Peter! by St Peter!
peyne, torture.
peyned, took pains ; **peyned** hir, strove.
peytrel, breast harness.
pighte (*him*), was pitched, fell,
piled, very thin.
pilwebeer, pillow-case.
pinche, find fault (with).
pitaunce, pittance, meal, contribution.
plages, regions.
plain, level, even ; waste.
plat, flat, certain.
platte, flat, side (of a sword).
pleye, play, jest.
pleyn, full ; completely.
pleyne, lament.
pleynly, plainly ; fully.
point : (*in good point* = in good case).
pollax, pole-axe.
pomel, top, ball.
pomely, dappled.
popinjay, (?) parrot.
poraille, poor wretches.
pose, cold in the head ; put case, will suppose.
positif, fixed.
post, pillar ; ale-stake.
potente, staff, crutch.
potestat, potentate, prince.
pounage, pannage (swine's food) ; wild fruit.
pouped, puffed, blew ; blown.
poure, pore.
povre, poor.
poynt, aim, object ; particular thing.

poynt devys, exquisitely.
 practisour, practitioner.
 predicacioun, preaching; sermon.
 prees, crowd, multitude, the world.
 preved, proved itself, was proved, proved to be so.
 pricasour, hard rider.
 privee, secret, secretly.
 propre, own.
 prow, benefit, profit.
 prys, price, prize, reputation.
 pulled, moulted, pluckt.
 purchas, gain by begging; purchasing, conveyancing.
 pure, very, true.
 purfled, (purpled, purled), trimmed.
 pyne, pain.
 pyned, punished, tormented, examined by torture.

queinte, curious, hard to understand.

quelle, kill.

quitly, wholly, freely.

quod, said.

quook, shook, quaked.

quyte, requite, pay, give.

ra, roe.

rad, read.

rage, romp, play.

rather, sooner.

raughte, reached.

ravyne, prey, ravin; greediness.

real, royal.

really, royally.

realme, kingdom.

rechased, headed back.

reclayme, reclaim (as a hawk); check.

recorde, remind, recall.

redely, readily, soon.

reed, advice, adviser; *also* red.

refut, refuge.

regals, royal honours.

rekeninges, accounts.

relaves, fresh packs.

remewed, removed.

ren, run.

renomee, renown.

reportour, reporter, judge.

rescous, rescue, help.

resons, opinions.

reve (grieve), reeve, steward, farm or estate manager; plunder.

reysed, made incursion, ridden, raided.

rheter, rhetorician.

ribaudrye, ribaldry, indecency.

right, just, exactly.

rit, rideth.

roghte, reckoned, recked.

ropen, reaped.

roum, roomy, large.

rouncy, nag, hack.

route, (rout), troop, band.

rused, made a feint, dodged.

rym, rime, verse.

sad, sober, firm, serious.

sadly, steadfastly, seriously, carefully.

saffron, colour, flavour; adorn.

sal, shall.

salueth, salutes.

samyt, samite, fine silk.

sarge, serge, coarse cloth.

sauth, saw.

sautrye, psaltery, harp, guitar.

savourous, pleasant, fragrant.

savour, have relish for, feel.

sawcefleem, pimped—from *salsa phlegma*.

sawe, saw, saying, speech.

scalled, scurfy.

scarsly, economically.

scathe, harm, misfortune, "a pity."

scoleye, study, learn, attend the schools.

seche, seek, be sought for; search.

see, behold, watch over, protect.

seel, seal.

seeth, boiled, (sod).

sege, siege.

seigh, saw.

seistow, sayest thou.

seke, seek, visit.

seke, sick, diseased.
 sely, simple, hapless, wretched.
 sendal, thin silk, taffeta.
 sentence, meaning; instruction.
 servant, lover.
 servisable, obliging.
 sette, put.
 seurtee, surety.
 seyl, sail.
 seyn, say.
 seynd, broiled, (singd).
 sexteyn, sacristan, keeper of the
 sacred vestments, &c.
 shamfast, shamefaced, shy,
 modest.
 shapen, plan, intend, prepare;
 find means.
 sheeldes, crowns (Fr. coins worth
 3s. 4d.)
 shene, bright.
 shent, disgraced, punished.
 sheter, shooter, good for shoot-
 ing with.
 shette, shut.
 shivere, thin slice, "shave (of
 bread)."
 sho, shoe.
 shoop, shaped, planned, prepared
 for.
 shrewe, curse; evil; accursed
 wretch, rascal.
 shrighite, shrieked.
 shul, shall.
 sigh, saw.
 sike, sick, ill: (sik).
 sikerer, surer, truer.
 sikerly, certainly.
 sit, (sitteth) sits.
 sithen, since, ago.
 slake, slacken, cease.
 slee, slay.
 sleep, slept.
 slough, mud, bog.
 slow, slew.
 sluttish, slovenly.
 slyk (Scottish), suchlike, such.
 slyt, slideth, passes.
 smerte, smart, give pain;
 smartly.
 snewed, swarmed, abounded,
 (? snowed).

snibben, snub, reprimand.
 soken, toll, mill-dues.
 solas, solace, amusement, pleas-
 ure.
 solempne, festive, cheerful; cere-
 monious, grand.
 somdel, somewhat.
 sonde, what is sent; gifts.
 sone, soon; son.
 soper, supper, dinner, *menu*.
 sort, lot, chance.
 sorted, appointed, allotted.
 sote, sweet; sweetly.
 sotely, subtly, shily.
 soth (sooth), true; truth.
 sotil, subtle, cunning; nicely
 woven or intertwined.
 souninge, sounding; making for.
 soupen, sup.
 souple, supple, soft.
 sours, swift upward flight.
 sovereynly, highest of all.
 spores, spurs.
 spoused, wedded.
 springen, sow broadcast.
 spyced, scrupulous, over-exact-
 ing.
 squyer (squire), shield-bearer,
 apprentice-knight.
 stages, positions, places.
 stal, stole, sneaked.
 stant (standeth), stands.
 stare, starling.
 stark, strong, hard.
 stede, stead, place.
 stellifye, change into a constella-
 tion.
 stemed, shone.
 stente, stopped, stinted, ceased.
 stepe, clear, bright.
 stere, rudder; guide, director.
 stertering, starting, mettlesome,
 active.
 sterve, die, perish.
 stevene, voice, sound; time.
 stewe, fish-pond.
 stif, strong.
 stillatorie, still (vessel for dis-
 tillling).
 stoke, stab, stick.
 stonden, to stand, to abide.

stoor, stock (on a farm).
 stopen, stepped, advanced.
 store, value.
 storven, perished.
 stot, cob.
 stounde, time; in a stounde =
 once.
 straunge, foreign, alien.
 stree, straw.
 streit, strict, severe; tight;
 small.
 strike (stryke), hank (of flax)
 strof, strove, vied.
 stroyer, destroyer.
 styward, steward, *major domo*.
 substaunce, income (of benefice,
 &c.)
 swappe, swoop, stroke.
 swatte, sweated.
 swayn, servant, boy, man.
 swete, to sweat; sweet.
 sweven, dream; dreams.
 swinke, toil, work.
 swithe, quickly, at once.
 swoot, sweat.
 swythe, at once.
 sykes, sighs.

tabide, to abide, to wait.
 tacheve, to achieve, to succeed
 in.
 tacord, to accord; agreement.
 taille, tally, credit.
 talen, to tell tales.
 tappestere, barmaid.
 taried, tarried, delayed.
 taspye, to espy.
 tassaye, to try.
 taste, prove.
 taverner, innkeeper.
 taylage, tax.
 telle, count, reckon.
 temple, inn of Court.
 tendyte, to compose.
 tentify, attentively.
 terme, set phrase; *in terme*, el-
 oquently, learnedly.
 testers, head-pieces, helmets.
 testif, headstrong.
 thamendes, the amends, repara-
 tion.

that, what.
 thee, then, thrive.
 their, the air.
 thencrees, the increase.
 thenke longe (think long), weary.
 thenketh, thinks, intends.
 ther, where.
 theras, where.
 therfore, for it.
 therthe, the earth.
 therto, besides, in addition.
 thewes, qualities, virtues.
 thikke, thick, numerous.
 thilke, that (or those) same.
 thinketh, it seemeth.
 this, this is.
 tho, those; then.
 throwe, space, while.
 throwes, throes, pangs.
 thrusteth, thirsts, longs.
 tikennesse, difficulty, instability.
 til, to; til and fra, to and fro.
 to, towards; too.
 to- (intensive).
 toforn, before.
 tohepe, together.
 tollen, take toll (*sc.* a miller's
 dues).
 ton, toes.
 to-sliterated, slashed.
 totore, much torn. (*To-* is in-
 tensive).
 translated, metamorphosed, made
 grand (by dress, &c.)
 trappures, trappings.
 trentals, a series of thirty masses
 for the dead.
 trepace, take precedence of.
 tretis, treaty.
 tretys, straight.
 triacle (treacle), cordial, sov-
 ereign remedy.
 trille, twirl, turn round.
 trone, throne.
 trussed, packed, tied.
 tulle, bring to the lure, allure.
 twinne, depart, part.
 tyde, time, season; hour.
 unces, small portions.
 uncouth, strange, rare.

undern, mid-forenoon (6 A.M.),
or mid-afternoon.

unnethe, scarcely, with difficulty.

unset, not fixed.

unthank, no blessing, curse.

untressed, unplaited, hanging
loose.

unyolden, withouthavingyielded.

up, upon.

up = got up.

uprist, rises up.

upriste, uprising.

upsodoun, upside down.

utterly, frankly; quite.

vache, cow.

vavasour, country gentleman
(next in rank to a baron).

venimous, poisonous.

verdit, verdict, opinion.

vernicle, picture of Christ (in
miniature); *the true image in
miniature*, as preserved in St
Peter's.

viage, journey.

vileinye, rudeness, rude word.

vouchesauf, grant, deign.

vyce, vice (as mispronunciation),
error, defect.

wake, watch, keep vigil.

wanges, grinders, molars, fangs.

wanie, wane, shrink.

wantown, wanton, roguish.

war, aware.

warde rere ! look out behind !

warente, warrant, protect.

warned, informed.

wastel, cake. Fr. *gâteau*.

watering, watering-place.

wawe, wave.

wayted (after), watched or looked
for, expected.

wayten, looked on.

wedres, weathers, storms.

weep, wept.

wel (unnethe), (scarcely) at all.

wel begoon, well pleased.

welde, weld (used in dyeing).

welden, wield, have the use of.

wele, joy, happiness.

welfaringe, handsome.

welked, withered.

wem, injury, blemish.

wende, weened, thought.

went, gone.

wente, passage; path; turn.

wente, was going, hastened.

wepne, weapon.

werche, work.

were, guard or defend; doubt

werken, act, work.

werre, war; worse.

werreyed, made war against.

wex, waxed, became.

wey, way, distance; time (to
accomplish a distance).

weyven, waive, forsake.

what, why.

whelkes, blotches, pimples.

whennes, whence.

wher, whether.

wheras, where.

which (a), such, what (a).

whistly, quietly.

whylom, formerly, once on a
time.

wight, strong, active; person.

wike, wyke, week.

wiket, gate.

wikke, wicked, malign.

wimpel, a covering for the neck
worn by nuns.

wis, verily, indeed.

wisly, certainly, indeed.

wisse, direct, guide.

wissh, washed.

wite, know, discover.

with, by.

withalle, also; indeed,

withholde, maintained; retained,
shut up.

withseye, oppose, gainsay.

wlatsom, horrid, heinous.

wo, sorry.

wodebynde, honeysuckle.

wol, will.

wolden, would, intended or de-
sired to.

wonder, wonderfully, very.

wone, wont, practice.

woned, dwelt.

woned, accustomed.
 wones, places of retreat, range
 of building, abbey.
 woning, dwelling, house.
 wood, mad.
 wood, woad (for dyeing).
 woon, plenty.
 woot, know.
 worm, adder.
 wortes, plants, cabbages.
 wost (wottest), knowest.
 wraw, angry, wroth.
 wreche, vengeance.
 wreen, wreathed, clad.
 wreke, wreak, avenge.
 wroght, made, born.
 wrything, twisting, screwing.
 wyke, week.
 wyn ape, wine which makes one
 behave like an ape.
 wynt, winds, turns, directs.
 wys, wise.
 wyse, guise, manner.
 wyte, blame.

 yaf, gave.
 yate, gate.
 ycleped, named, called
 ydight, dressed, decorated.

ydo, done, ended.
 ydrawe, drawn (from the cask).
 ye, yea, yes.
 ye, eye ; yen, eyes.
 yeddinges, songs, singing com-
 petitions.
 yelde, yield, pay, reward.
 yerd, garden.
 yerde, stick.
 yerne, briskly.
 yeven, give.
 yglosed, flattered.
 yhalowed, halloed.
 yliche, alike, equally.
 ylogged, lodged.
 ylyke, alike, like.
 ymaad, made.
 yolle, shouted, yelled.
 yore, formerly, long ago.
 yow, you.
 ypinched, pleated, caught in.
 yshette, shut.
 yshrive, confessed, pardoned
 after confession and penance.
 yswonke, toiled.
 yteyd, tied, laced.
 ytukked, tucked up, held up.
 yvele, evil, ill.
 ywis, certainly.

THE END.

dag day

gubegen - saayen

maged - maged

pagat - sayd

dagat - sayd

pagat } N.E.
sayd }

| | | | | |
|----|-------------|-------|-------|------|
| 11 | os dagat | dagat | dagat | dawn |
| | dagat | dagat | dagat | |

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urccate

urccate

urccate

quyte - quit quiet quite acquit, coy.

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a year

veal

vitulare - to celebrate a festival

vitula - a particular matron
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